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CHARACTERS AND TALES.

CHARACTERS AND TALES.

CHARACTERS,

OMITTED IN

CRABBE'S PARISH REGISTER;

WITH

OTHER TALES.

BY ALEXANDER BALFOUR,

AUTHOR OF CONTEMPLATION, &c.

"I paint the cot
As Truth would paint it, and as bards will not.
No Muse I ask before my view to bring
The humble actions of the swains I sing.
By what elated, sooth'd, seduced, depress'd,
Full well I know,---these records give the rest."

EDINBURGH.

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.

SOLD BY A. CONSTABLE AND COMPANY, EDINBURGH; BRASH AND COMPANY, GLASGOW; AND HURST, ROBINSON, AND COMPANY, LONDON.

1825.

LOAN STACK

Printed at the Advertiser Office, Dundee.

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Advertisement.

THE following Characters originally appeared in the EDINBURGH MAGAZINE, published by Messrs Constable and Company; an extract from the Register of Births, Marriages, and Burials, being, for the sake of variety, given in each number. They are now published with the approbation of the proprietors of that miscellany; and it has been thought proper to preserve the original arrangement.

It may also be premised, that, in humble imitation of the justly-celebrated Poet and Moralist, in whose wake the author has attempted to follow, the character of the narrator as a clergyman is continued, furnishing farther extracts from his Parish Register.

Edinburgh, July 1825.

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The reader is requested to have the goodness to correct the following ERRATA with a pen. At page 6, line 2, for "mein," read "mien;" page 16, line 16, for "faultering," read "faltering;" page 97, line 3, for "women," read "woman;" page 114, line 4, for "flirts," read "flits;" page 174, line 15, for "hi'," read "hie;" page 256, line 14, for "smoke," read "smokes;" page 266, line 23, for "crush'd," read "crash'd."

CHARACTERS.

No. I.

Some critics say, my Muse, delighted, strays
In filthy puddles and in thorny ways,
Relates with pleasure chill Misfortune's strife,
And sings with joy the woes that sadden life.

I own she scorns the soft unmeaning strain
That spreads perpetual summer o'er the plain;
Where every breeze comes wing'd with odours sweet,
And El Dorado's gold paves every street;
Where age and sickness never prompt a sigh,
Nor tear has ever dimm'd the sparkling eye;
But all is sunshine, life for ever young,
Health on each cheek, and truth on every tongue.

This fairy-land may rise to Fancy's view;
But where it lies, I own I never knew.
Howe'er Philosophy her systems scan,
Here full perfection was not meant for man.
Nature is constant in her varying forms,—
The sweets of summer and her wintery storms;
Chill blighting mildew hovers o'er the vale;
Disease and Death ride on the tainted gale;
O'er Ocean's breast, resistless tempests sweep,
And bury navies in the foaming deep;
Red lightnings blast, and earthquakes rock the ground,
Tornadoes spreading desolation round.
These Nature's paths: And man, poor erring child!
A devious wanderer in life's mazy wild,—
Where Vice and Virtue hold unceasing war,
Where headstrong Passions with weak Reason jar,—
Such is the path that man must travel here,
Alternately the child of Hope and Fear.
By Folly lured, some seek a smoother road,
While others, fainting, sink beneath the load;
And some there are, who cheerful pass along,
In patience fruitful, or in virtue strong.

This motley train is found on every side:
Of such I sing, and Truth my constant guide.

Register of Births.

THE SAILOR'S ORPHAN.

Now at the font an orphan boy appears,
Whose cheek was never wet with mother's tears:
Before his birth, of father's love bereft,
To strangers' now and Heaven's protection left.

Tom Wilson was of hapless love the child:
His mother's easy faith too soon beguiled,
Her virgin zone a flatterer's tongue untied;
She hoped to be—but never was—a bride.
From home expell'd, she wander'd forth forlorn;
Though few could pity, many look'd with scorn;
Of friends forsaken, stain'd her virgin fame,
She, weeping, gazed upon her child of shame.

There are who o'er their early errors mourn,
And gladly would to Virtue's paths return;
But dragon forms beset the bolted door,
And, frowning, say, "You enter here no more!"

By cautious Prudence, or self-righteous Pride,
With scornful sneer, admission is denied:
The hapless victim feels her fate unkind,
And Vice and Virtue combat in her mind.

So felt this mother in misfortune's hour:
She had the will—the world denied the power.
She many a night would o'er her infant weep,
And, forced by want, go supperless to sleep.
Oh, sad alternative! 'twas now to die—
Or live, and eat the bread of infamy.
Temptation sought her—she was fair and young;
Her proud heart swell'd with disappointment stung;
The world had been unkind, but life had charms—
An infant boy was smiling in her arms.
Her choice was made—since tears could not restore
Her wonted peace, the damsel wept no more.

Time stole away; and Tom, a thriving boy,
Now felt a mother's shame his peace destroy.
When thirteen years had roll'd around his head,
With wounded pride he from that mother fled;
On board a stranger bark he left the shore,
With stern resolve there to return no more.

For seven long years, the Merlin's deck he trode,
And fearless on the mountain-billows rode,—
Through narrow Cattegat had wrought his way,
And stemm'd the tide in Biscay's stormy Bay,—
Had bronzed his face on India's torrid coast,
And, shivering, winter'd in Archangel's frost.
In every duty Tom could take his part
With steady hand and calm undaunted heart:
But niggard Fate had to his skill denied,
By rule and chart, the vessel's course to guide.
Ambition now his breast began to fire,
And bade him to a nobler post aspire.
With mind resolved, and head both clear and cool,
He staid on shore, and studied hard at school.

With sines and tangents now familiar grown—
What was mysterious, intimately known—
He joyous saw, in his horizon far,
Hope shed her rays, a bright and brilliant star.
With new-born fire he felt his bosom glow,
For love had promised paradise below.

Young Susan Campbell he had often seen;
And in his eyes she shone perfection's queen.

With dimpling cheek, blue eyes, and auburn hair,
Her mein was modest, as her face was fair.
Of manners gentle, as her heart was kind,
Her winning features spoke a kindred mind.
Tom saw, admired, and sought the maid again,
Look'd, loved, and languish'd, till he told his pain.
The chilling frown, from affectation's art,
Was all unknown to Susan's guileless heart:
A faithful bridegroom and a blushing bride,
Both sigh'd in secret till the knot was tied.

One little week on downy pinions flew;
Tom press'd her cheek, and bade a short adieu:
"Cheer up, my love!" he cried; "these tears restrain;
My duty calls—we part to meet again.
This voyage made, my skill to exercise,
I shall the next above my messmates rise;
And I have hopes, should Heaven prolong my life,
To see my Susan smile a captain's wife!"

Three tedious months had slowly lingering pass'd,
While Tom aloft, high on the bending mast,
Rock'd on the billow, would the topsail clew,
And trill a ballad to his lovely Sue;

While she, when night-winds raved around her head,
Would turn and sigh upon her sleepless bed.
Now safe return'd before the auspicious gale,
The harbour gain'd, and furled the flapping sail,
The bark is moor'd—Tom lightly springs to land,
And fondly presses Susan's trembling hand—
Leads her along, still gazing as they go—
No happier pair were ever link'd below.
At home, he smiled; her glowing cheek he press'd,
And clasp'd her, blushing, to his manly breast.
Ah me! how short their hour of guileless joy!
Oh, why should Fate their budding bliss destroy?
Or why should Britain, Freedom's boasted isle,
Her bravest sons of their best rights beguile?
While Susan's eye with fond affection beam'd,
And through the lattice purple twilight gleam'd,
A ruffian-crew, the tools of legal power,
Like Satan seeking whom they may devour,
With rudeness tore the husband from her arms,
Unmoved by woman's tears or beauty's charms!
She weeps, she kneels—but kneels and weeps in vain;
Then, like the lily, when surcharged with rain,

Low at their feet she pale and prostrate lay,
While they relentless grasp their hapless prey.
Why should my pen the pensive tale pursue?
She wakes—her sailor's vanish'd from her view;
For he is doom'd to quit the peaceful shore,
And go where Britain bids her thunders roar,
His sighs to mingle with the midnight wind,
And muse on her he left to mourn behind.
Though time had wiped the tear from Susan's eye,
Still would her widow'd heart in sadness sigh.
A letter came—it spoke her sailor's heart:
"Dear Susan, though I felt it death to part,
I must not die in this eventful hour,
When Britain, threaten'd, dares a boaster's power.
With gallant Nelson now the foe I brave,
And he still triumphs on the ocean-wave.
When I have gather'd laurels on the main,
Thy smile shall bless my longing eyes again.
Till then, cheer up! and know, my heart, dear Sue,
Is like my jacket—still unchanging blue!"
She read, and sigh'd, and bathed it in her tears;
For now she felt a mother's hopes and fears.

Time steals apace—the bells with pealing sound
Sonorous ring, proclaiming gladness round;
On every side, the shout, the loud huzza,
Rejoicing, tell Trafalgar's glorious day;
And, while they Nelson's hapless death deplore,
The bonfire blazes and the cannon roar:
But, Susan's heart with dread suspense oppress'd,
Each peal was anguish to her aching breast.

In came Dame Lorimer, with meek demand,
A seaman's letter in her wither'd hand:
"Dear Susan, read: You know I want the skill;
Yet sure am I that letter is from Will.
Thank God, he lives! Perhaps of Tom we'll hear:
On board the Victory both were comrades dear."

The blotted scroll, she, anxious, open tore,
Glanced o'er the page, and sunk upon the floor:
It told a tale that froze the springs of life;
For she was now a friendless widow'd wife!
She waked—to weep? Oh no! her brain was dry;
And Nature, 'midst her mental agony,
Gave to this world of wo an orphan son;
But ah! his hapless mother's glass was run!

No infant's cry her withering griefs beguiled;
Her feeble arms ne'er clasp'd the hapless child;
For, pale and cold, that mother ceased to mourn,
And never knew a living son was born!

By strangers' hands his mother's shroud was dress'd,
And strangers bare her to her house of rest—
Untimely nipt, in youth and beauty's bloom,
No tear of sorrow trickling on her tomb;
No dimpling smile suffused the cheek of joy;
No bosom glow'd and bless'd the orphan boy;
No father's love for him this sprinkling sought,
By strangers to this hallow'd fountain brought;
No mother near, the sacred vows to share,
Her heart responding to the pastor's prayer,—
The child, more helpless than the creeping worm,
Is left alone to meet life's blighting storm.

Register of Marriages.

JANE WOODLEY.

Next on my list a loving pair is found,
Who furnish'd talk for all the country round;

Their early courtship, and their wedding late,
Display the strange vicissitudes of fate.

Of all the maids that trode the village-green,
The loveliest lass was Farmer Woodley's Jean,—
Sweet as the blossom on the thorn of May,
Blithe as the blackbird on its bending spray,
And modest as the flower that hides its head
Amidst the dews that gem its grassy bed:
Her father's only child, his hope and pride,
Each wish was granted and each want supplied:
Yet, strange to say, indulged, caress'd, adored,
The maiden's mind with understanding stored,
Of wealth not proud, of beauty never vain,
Its calm unvarying tenour could retain:
But those acquainted with her mother knew
Her pious love, and prudence match'd by few;
And they who made the farmer's pride their jest,
Own'd Jane was in a mother's counsels blest.
Her twentieth summer now had pass'd away,
And lovers fawn'd and flatter'd night and day.
The scented beau would talk and praise her charms;
The purse-proud fool, of cattle, corn, and farms.

That raved of raptures which could never cloy,
And *this* how wealth could purchase every joy:
Nor *this* nor *that* the maiden's heart could move,
A nobler passion it was doom'd to prove.

John Bell was foreman on her father's farm,
Fire in his eye, strength in his brawny arm;
Benignant Nature had to him been kind,
And gave the guileless heart and generous mind;
With independence pictured in his face,
Soft blending there with many a milder grace.
He saw Jane Woodley with a lover's eye,
And oft in secret heaved the hopeless sigh.
Let wiser sages than myself decide,
And say, if it was modesty or pride
Which made the youth his fond affection hide.

But secret fire, although from sight conceal'd,
Is often by its latent heat reveal'd.
John sought in vain his passion to disguise—
Jane saw his glances, and she heard his sighs;
And soon her heart with equal ardour burn'd—
She glance for glance and sigh for sigh return'd;
And while she gazed, her bosom felt with joy,
Though John was poor, he was "no vulgar boy."

Thus Love to both imparted bliss and pain,
Too well convinced that they must love in vain;
For richer suitors now pursued the prize,
And wealth was all in Farmer Woodley's eyes;
Who, while he o'er the list of lovers ran,
Cried, "Andrew Miller is the warmest man!
His farms are large, his leases long and cheap,
The hills around are white with Andrew's sheep,
His browsing cattle blacken o'er the vale,
And his rich harvests ripen in the gale.
Jane, mind your hits—strike while the iron's hot;
Thank Heaven for sending such a happy lot!"
"What! blear-eyed Andrew, with his neck awry,
Whose fiftieth year at least has long gone by?"
"True, Jane, his neck has got an awkward twitch,
His eyes are watery—but the man is rich."
"But wealth, my father, may be bought too dear:
Yet sure you joke—you cannot be sincere,
And only spoke to try your daughter's heart,
Which still has spurn'd the mean disguise of art,
And to a father must with frankness tell
Its choice is made." "What! who? haste! speak"—
"John Bell."

"John Bell! not worth a groat!—the wench is mad—
A farmer's daughter wed a ploughman lad!"
The angry father forth in wrath is gone,
Strides o'er the fields, and meets his foreman John,
With passion glowing in his purple face;—
A quarrel 's pick'd, and John resigns his place.
Now dire events in quick succession tread:
The prudent mother mingles with the dead;
By lust of wealth, lured to a foolish scheme,
Too late the farmer finds the whole a dream,—
Farm, corn, and cattle brought to public sale,
And he, unpitied, rudely lodged in gaol.
The gentle Jane attends her father there,
Still talks of hope, and soothes his hours of care:
But where are now the fawning, cringing crowd,
Who flatter'd Jane, and to the father bow'd?
Is she less lovely?—No; but wealth has flown.
And must the fair, neglected, pine alone?—
No; Andrew Miller, with his crooked neck,
Has for Misfortune's children some respect:
He seeks the farmer in his sad abode;
And on his wrinkled cheek a hectic glow'd,

Within this scanty space the fair to find,—
He knew her beauteous, and he found her kind.
With sorrow, shame, and sadly-humbled pride,
Dejected Woodley sought his face to hide.
"Cheer up!" said Andrew; "'tis Misfortune's hour;
But cloudless sunshine may succeed the shower.
Come, if you please, we'll talk of your affairs;
And if I can, I'll try to ease your cares.
What! has misfortune made you deaf and dumb?
Who put you here? and for how large a sum?"
"I cannot talk; but, if you please to look,
You'll find the whole recorded in that book."
He glanced it o'er, and cried, "Why, man, I'm glad—
Not that you 're here—but things are not so bad!
Five hundred pounds would purchase your discharge,
Undo these bolts, and set my friend at large."
"Five hundred pounds!" said Woodley, with a sigh;
"I cannot now five hundred pence supply."
"No doubt; but others can." And Andrew took
The farmer's hand, and glanced a hasty look
On Jane, who through the grated window gazed,
Where setting sunbeams in the welkin blazed.

The speaker paused: Again his glistening eye
Declared the meed which might his friendship buy.
The farmer's nod said, "Yes, your mind I know."
Up Andrew rose—"Farewell! for I must go;
And, Jane, good night! your father's spirits cheer;
Some time to-morrow trust to see me here."

Within the prison Jane had soundly slept—
That night she press'd her humble couch and wept,
For Andrew's meaning to her mind was plain—
She thought of John, and turn'd and wept again.
But filial duty made the maid decide,
And Jane determined to be Andrew's bride.
At morn, her father, when about to speak,
Beheld the big tears coursing o'er her cheek.
A heaving sigh deep from her bosom broke,
While she with feeble, faultering accent spoke—
"I know, dear father, what your heart would say;
My choice is made—I will your wish obey.
If Jephtha's daughter was to fate resign'd,
Not less heroic is Jane Woodley's mind.
To set you free, and save your health and life,
Tell Andrew Miller I will be—his wife."

The farmer freed, the sacrifice is made;
But he for whom this mighty price was paid,
His haughty spirit broke, in health declined,
In body frail, and imbecile in mind,
On Andrew's bounty eats and drinks and sleeps,
Laughs like a child at trifles, sighs, and weeps.

"The world's dread laugh" Jane Woodley soon forgot,
And learn'd to live contented with her lot;
For Andrew Miller had no sordid mind,
And, as old husbands are, was fondly kind.
Years roll'd around—his heart was never cold;
While Jane was young, he never could be old.
He saw three sportive children on the floor;
And, while he gazed, forgot he was threescore.
With restless mind, through life he'd schemed and plann'd,
With ways and means still ready at command:
Pursuing wealth, he held five different farms;
And still, impell'd by her seductive charms,
New schemes employ'd his enterprising soul,—
He marshes drain'd, dug ore, and mined for coal.
Thus have I seen a turnspit, panting, toil,
And climb the ponderous wheel with ceaseless moil;

And though the wheel was still revolving round,
The hapless cur was still at bottom found.
So clamber'd Andrew in the wheel of life,
Till Death, unsparing, came and closed the strife.
'Twas then, alas! his ways and means were plain;
For bills and bonds appear'd in lengthen'd train.
At last, his whole estate was bankrupt found—
Unfit to pay five shillings in the pound;
And Jane, of friends and husband now bereft,
A helpless widow, with three orphans left—
Her father too, who proudly Fate arraign'd,
Though of the man scarce ought but pride remain'd.

John Bell, dismiss'd from Goodman Woodley's farm,
Soon found his native vale no more could charm,
And turn'd to go; but felt, with Jane to part
Was pain and anguish to his wounded heart—
A rankling wound the world could never cure;
But time he hoped would teach him to endure.
He brush'd the tear which fell for lovely Jane,
And bent his way to Lothian's fertile plain.
With strength and skill to plough or sow the field,
The team to guide, or sweeping sithe to wield,

He found a place; rose daily in esteem;
But still Jane Woodley was his nightly dream.
He heard at last that she was Andrew's bride:
His faithful heart for woman's weakness sigh'd,
Then breathed a prayer for happiness to Jane,
And vow'd in secret ne'er to love again.

Ten years had pass'd, and he was basking warm,
The thriving tenant of a Lothian farm,
When Fame to him the painful tidings brought,
Of woes that Fate for hapless Jane had wrought.
True Love's celestial flame can ne'er expire;
Though Time had cool'd, he had not quench'd the fire:
John felt anew his tenderness return,
His passion with its wonted fervour burn!
He sought and found his Jane—a widow meek,
And wiped the tear from her still blooming cheek.
Due honour paid to the departed dead,
The blushing fair was to the altar led;
And ne'er before me stood a happier pair;
I join'd their hands and pour'd the nuptial prayer:
'Twas heard on high; Time sees their bliss abound,
Their faithful loves with full fruition crown'd.

On Andrew's children John with kindness smiles,
And Farmer Woodley's childish griefs beguiles:
Their loves are bless'd with blooming girls and boys;
And growing wealth diffuses worldly joys:
For these, their grateful aspirations rise
To Him who rules and reigns above the skies.

Register of Burials.

THE VILLAGE DOCTOR.

Yon silver willow in the corner, weeps
Above the spot where Peter Barnard sleeps.
No grave like his is in the churchyard seen;
Its turf, untrodden, smiles in lasting green.
He, when in health, chose that sequester'd spot,
Where, unmolested, his remains might rot.

Though never nursed at Alma Mater's breast,
Not small the lore that Peter's head possess'd;
For Nature's mysteries occult he knew
At least as much as some professors do.
Versed in astrology, he talk'd of signs,
Of houses, aspects, quadratures, and trines;

Now a geologist, deep, dark, and far
He'd dive, and talk of strata, quartz, and spar.
But he in botany unrivall'd shone;
To him the vegetable world was known,
From forest-trees, the winter winds that mock,
To grey moss, creeping on the mountain-rock;
And all were named in such Linnæan style,
As made the vulgar stare, the learned smile:
Willow was *salix*, and the yellow broom
Was gay *genista*, with her golden bloom:
Then he would talk of genus, order, sex;
With hybrid, pollen, hearer's ears perplex;
And though they could not his acquirements scan,
Yet all agreed he was a wondrous man!

His was yon cottage on the common's edge,
And his the garden fenced with hawthorn hedge.
The cot was rear'd by Peter's skilful hand,
The hedge-row planted, and the garden plann'd:
All show'd his skill and persevering toil;
For bleak the spot, and rugged was the soil;
But Peter saw, with keen judicious eye,
Its fair exposure to the southern sky.

The furze was grubb'd; the rude contiguous rock,
With blasting powder, for materials broke;
Beneath his patient hand the walls arise;
Anon the axe with equal skill he plies;
He roofs and thatches—hope his toil beguiles—
Sees all complete, and o'er his labour smiles.
The garden next his constant care requires—
From morn to night he toils, but never tires;
He ditches, drains, digs, levels, sows, and plants,
And sees provision for his future wants:
Anticipation paints the prospect fair,
And Peter views a promised Eden there!
He sues for Ellen's love—is wedded—bless'd—
No care invades his paradise of rest.
"But how," you ask, "were daily wants supplied?
And how did they for food and clothes provide?"
Though Fashion ever kindles new desires,
Few are the wants that rural life requires.
His Ellen smiled content in plain array,
And Peter's gala-dress was russet grey:
No stimulating food his thirst provoked;
He drank no spirits, nor tobacco smoked:

His cow the common and the garden fed.
But come, my friend, let us, by Fancy led,
The spot explore, and see what I have seen,
And mark the treasures of his small demesne.
That stack of turf in winter warms his cot,
That wither'd furze in summer boils the pot.
Step in and rest—'twill feast your eyes to stop
And look around the Village Doctor's shop,—
The window-sash with gay green foliage bound,
Sweet eglantine and woodbine twining round;
A wooden clock conspicuous meets the view,
That ceaseless ticks, and hourly calls "cuckoo!"
In wicker cage, a captive sky-lark sings,
Hops up and down, and plumes his useless wings.
That open cupboard, in the corner placed,
With boxes, gallipots, and phials graced,
By Peter term'd the Magazine of Health,
Has proved the mine from whence he draws his wealth;
(Without diploma Peter plies his hand,
And scatters fate and physic o'er the land);
Here, withering herbs on cords suspended swing,
There, rhubarb roots are dangling in a string;

While crocus flowers with marigolds are laid,
And camomile, to shrivel in the shade;
Hot pungent seeds and bitter herbs abound,
The spoils of Nature scatter'd all around.
That deal-board shelf supports the scanty store
From whence he draws his literary lore,—
Culpepper, Ray, Lightfoot, and Sir John Hill,
All duly studied for botanic skill;
While Wesley's recipes teach physic's trade,
And Tippermalloch comes to Buchan's aid;
With ponderous folios, now forgot by Fame,
And authors deem'd unlawful once to name,
On alchymy, with hocus-pocus rules
By knavish charlatans and dreaming fools.
On shelf below, a quarto Bible's seen,
With brazen clasps, and clothed in flannel green:
On page the first, the date recorded stands
When he and Nell were join'd in wedlock's bands;
And there the register of births is found
Of those who have their nuptial fondness crown'd.
Botanic plates are pasted on the walls,
With horoscopes and hieroglyphic scrawls;

A badger, stuff'd, stands grinning on the floor;
A rusty musket leans behind the door,
Which, after autumn, in this lonely spot,
Still brings him something for his Sunday's pot;
For hares are plenty, partridges abound,
And wild-ducks in the neighbouring lake are found:
There stands his angling-rod, with line and hook,
Which drags the guileless victim from the brook.
Here hangs a fiddle from a rusty nail;
There waves a feather from a peacock's tail:
On paper pinn'd, gay butterflies are seen,
Erewhile light floating o'er the meadow green—
Their velvet wings still seeming to unfold
In glowing purple and resplendent gold;
The dragon-fly, with wings extended, shines;
In crystal case, the speckled viper twines;
The mantel-piece with petrifactions groans,
With minerals, fossils, shells, and lunar stones:
Right in the centre stands a staring owl,
Perch'd on a stucco'd monk, with sable cowl.
A rude bench, raised above the window-sill,
Will feast your eyes, your brain with fragrance fill;—

There, pots and broken pipkins, placed in rows,
A mimic green-house to the sight disclose,
Where summer wantons in perennial bloom,
And mingling odours shed their rich perfume.
Now, if you please, we 'll o'er the garden stray,
Where Nature smiles in garments ever gay;
For Peter boasts it never wants a flower,
Some bud, or bloom, defying winter's power;
And evergreens, that spread their branching forms,
Shine o'er the snow, and smile amidst the storms.
You 've seen a richer spot, a scene more fair;
But, such a medley of the wild and rare,
Within one single acre's narrow bound,
You 'll own, is not in all the country round.
Each heath that blossoms on the Highland hill—
Each plant that nods above the cooling rill—
The tender flower, that, like the bashful maid,
Shrinks from the sun, and sickens for the shade,
And that whose bosom courts the noontide ray,
Like vain coquette, who smiles at ball and play—
The plant that feeds and fattens on the tomb,
Of noxious scent, and lurid, loathsome bloom,—

The fungus tribe, these children of a day,
Thick clustering moss, and creeping lichen grey—
All here have place, and each its proper soil,
Produced by art and persevering toil:
The bubbling fountain, and the marshy lake,
The rude, rough rock, soft mould, and tangling brake,
The shady covert, and the sunny green,—
Such varying charms adorn this rural scene.
That velvet walk, in which we careless pass,
Shows stranger wild-flowers peeping from the grass.
You hear a ceaseless, busy, humming sound,—
'Tis Nature's chemists toiling all around;
In order ranged, along that fence, you 'll see
Six hives, the home of the industrious bee;
And while the race the garden's sweets explore,
Their summer's toil augments his humble store.
That rabbit-hutch contains a thriving race—
The parents kill'd to give the children place.
Such Peter's wealth, by Art and Nature sent;
A constant inmate in his breast—Content.

By skill, or chance, he wrought a wondrous cure;
'Twas blazed abroad, and then success was sure:

The tale was magnified, and gossip fame
For ten miles round reëchoed Peter's name,—
The young, the old, the cripple, and the blind,
Their various ails to Peter's care consign'd:
He fractured limbs with nice adjustment tied,—
Colds, coughs, and cholics, by his art defied;
With rusty lancet, boldly breathed a vein,
Reduced luxations, soothed rheumatic pain;
And from the anguish'd rustic's watering mouth,
With dextrous twitch would drag the carious tooth.
The breast, intestines, liver, lungs, and spleen,
By Nature's hand are placed in cells unseen;
But Peter boldly ventured in the dark,
Par hazard shot, and sometimes hit the mark.
Whate'er the case, his art was always tried,
Each patient had or drugs or herbs applied:
Then Peter, with facetious look, would say,
"As I must live, you must for medicines pay:
These herbs to rear, cost me both toil and care;
That powder's costly, and this drug is rare:
Just half-a-crown—a moderate demand;
And now we'll wait for Art and Nature's hand.

I know your case; but boast not of my skill;
You know I sometimes cure, and seldom kill;
I'll set you right, if such is Heaven's decree:
When you get well, I'll then expect my fee."

'Twas nought uncommon, on a Sunday morn,
To see some eight or ten, with looks forlorn,
Stroll in the garden, or his door surround—
His skill so famous, and his name renown'd.
Some, doubtless, were with real pain distress'd;
And others came with fancied ills oppress'd;
And I had heard, that sometimes in the crowd
Was pass'd the wanton joke, with laughter loud:
I therefore hinted, in a friendly way,
At profanation of that hallow'd day——
He quick replied, as unabash'd he stood,
"On Sabbath, Sir, 'tis lawful to do good!
So said our heavenly Master, so say I:
Hard were my heart, could I relief deny;
Though Heaven perhaps has circumscribed my skill,
It sets no limits to my heart and will."

Thus, twenty years he lived a lucky quack,
And jogg'd securely in his beaten track.

Such faith had many in his healing hand,
Some fools imagined he could Death withstand:
But ah! when Peter's sun with splendour shone,
The hour of darkness came—his day was done!
By fever seized, he grappled with the foe—
The conquering tyrant laid his victim low:
In vain his children's tears, his Ellen's sighs—
Beneath that sod our Village Doctor lies!

His turf, with camomile and daisies dress'd,
They bud and blossom on his mouldering breast;
His mourning widow spread that carpet there,
And still 'tis green beneath her watchful care:
She placed that weeping willow o'er his head,—
No foot profane disturbs his lonely bed;
And village peasants, as they pass the spot,
Show Peter Barnard is not yet forgot.

CHARACTERS.

No. II.

THINK not on wo my pen delights to dwell,
The crimes and sufferings of mankind to tell.
More light, I own, more pleasing were the theme;
To paint the world as doating lovers dream;
But Truth requires, that, with impartial hand,
I take my facts as they recorded stand.
My present extracts, I with grief relate,
The truth confirm, that Folly makes our Fate.
With giddy head, light heart, and wayward mind,
We, plunging, sink, and call our stars unkind.
The prudent surgeon, with a tender heart,
In danger's hour performs a painful part;

With daring hand, essays his nicest skill,
Uncertain whether he shall cure or kill.
And there are others in a different sphere,
Who, if in duty's track they onward steer,
Must often ponder and proceed with pain,
Then grieve to think they've thought and toil'd in vain.
The faithful shepherd who his flock would guide,
Must for their safety, with their food provide—
With watchful eye, and arm in duty bold,
From foul infection must preserve the fold.
In barren wastes, if they untended stray,
They fall the victims of the beasts of prey;
Or, faint with hunger, in the desert die,
The guilty shepherd loitering careless by.
But he may err by too much care and toil,
For there is danger in too rank a soil:
Disease will often from indulgence rise,
Luxuriant pastures, or too humid skies.
Thus, some, neglected, mourn their hapless lot;
While others, fed to foul repletion, rot.
Hence, judgment ever should with care unite,
In all who wish to guide their flocks aright:

But stragglers still their wayward course will hold,
Leap o'er the fence, and wander from the fold.
Enough—I check my moralizing strain;
For shepherds watch and parsons preach in vain.
Again I dip my warning pen, to show
What sad misfortunes from our follies flow.

Register of Births.

THE SURGEON'S APPRENTICE.

John Marshall was a sprightly, thoughtless boy;
His days were pleasure, and his nights were joy.
In Fashion's train, a sprucely-scented fool,
He squired the ladies ere he left the school:
In dress a fop—to fiddle, dance, and sing—
To run the round in fluttering Pleasure's ring—
To smile and prattle nonsense with the fair—
For these he lived, and had no other care.
From what the world calls vice, the lad was free—
Was not licentious, nor a debauchee;
But he in trifling pass'd his time away,
For ever thoughtless, and for ever gay;

Behind a surgeon's counter, novels read—
Shut shop—went out—at two, came home to bed.
Kate Logan bloom'd a beauty of sixteen,
And was—what girls in nonage oft are seen:
In short, the maiden was John's counterpart,
Her head as empty, and as light her heart:
She dress'd, she flirted, flutter'd on the wing,
A gaudy butterfly, in early spring,
Unapprehensive of the April storm
That yet might come to spoil her slender form.
Her father's house was just across the street;
And from the window oft their eyes would meet.
He gazed, delighted, on the lovely fair;
And she admired his gait and graceful air.
He sent a ticket to an annual ball—
Her heart exulted at the welcome call.
How slowly pass'd the lingering hours away,
Till came the dear, the long-expected day!
She gazed around her in the crowded room,
On every side a blaze of youthful bloom:
Delight and envy whirl'd her teeming brain;
But John's attentions soothed her mental pain.

He led her out to join a country dance;
They pair'd and cross'd, exchanging glance for glance.
With fairy lightness, gliding o'er the floor,
She ne'er had felt such dear delight before.
Beaux ogled, smiled, and bow'd on every side;
She simper'd, blush'd, and spread her triumphs wide.
Well did her cheek and sparkling eyes impart
The foolish fluttering of her little heart.
John led her home—next morning made his call—
Discuss'd the pleasures of the festive ball.
The mother soon invited him to tea;
Next, daily visits follow'd, frank and free.
He in the parlour chatted, laugh'd, and talk'd;
And then, with Kate, alone in twilight walk'd.
With fond romantic girls and giddy boys,
Love seems a paradise of fairy joys;
And, to secure a lease of bliss for life,
They blindly hasten to be man and wife.
So thought and felt, so acted John and Kate,
Resolved to wed, and rush upon their fate.
Both parents tried their ardour to restrain,
But found all counsel and remonstrance vain:

For, when the fond impatient lovers felt
That nought the stubborn parents' hearts would melt,
To reach the promised land, they changed the scene,
And tied the mystic knot at Gretna Green!
The sun of love ne'er shed a brighter noon
Than the rich splendour of their honey-moon;
Entranced the pair in necromantic bower,
Without a thought beyond the present hour.
They home return'd, and, kneeling, were forgiven.
That cloud dispell'd from their connubial heaven,
Another came they could not turn aside—
How they should for their future wants provide.
The parents tried to make the best of bad,
And took a shop, therein to fix the lad;
Above the door a gilded mortar placed,
The window-shelves with colour'd water graced,
Invited all who held their lives in care,
To purchase physic, health, and safety there.
The field was narrow—John, unknown to fame,
His rival thriving, and had gain'd a name:
John's custom little, and his practice less,
Kate kill'd his languor in a game at chess.

Then they would fondle, trifle, flirt, and toy:
But sweets too luscious still the soonest cloy;
And daily groping in an empty till,
Was not the way life's growing cares to kill.
Yet Love, intent his drooping mind to cheer,
Gave hopes a father's name would glad his ear.
These hopes fulfill'd, with joyous heart he saw,
He kiss'd his son and Catherine in the straw:
"This lovely cherub, with his mother's smile,"
He cried, "will now life's languid hours beguile."
A month or two both parents hugg'd the boy,
As Miss her doll or any darling toy:
But soon they found him turn'd a squalling brat,
Whose cries and clamour spoil'd their fondling chat.
If mortals laugh, or cry, or wake, or sleep,
The wheels of time their constant motion keep.
Slow o'er their heads another year had pass'd,
And Poverty's dark shades were thickening fast.
John found that Catherine's cheek had lost its bloom,
And on his brow she mark'd the lowering gloom.
On love they once could breakfast, dine, and sup;
But found it now an almost empty cup.

She sigh'd and wept; John frown'd and rail'd at Fate,
His sidelong glance accusing hapless Kate;
And both deplored their folly when too late.
While they with want and growing coldness strove,
A daughter came—a second pledge of love:
But, credit gone—accounts and bills unpaid,
Their ruin could no longer be delay'd,
What could he do? or whither steer his course?
A Greenland whale-ship seem'd his best resource;—
He sail'd to lasting day and polar frost.
By icebergs crush'd, the hapless ship was lost!
On board a vessel bound for Aberdeen,
The shipwreck'd crew forsook the dreary scene.
O'ercome with travel, hunger, care, and pain,
And clothed in rags, John found his home again;
And came in time an infant boy to bring,
For holy unction, from the sacred spring!
Before the font he stood with aspect wild;—
I mourn'd the parents, while I bless'd the child!
Ah! how unlike the giddy thoughtless pair,
When John was gay, and Kate a blooming fair!
His mirth forgot, her blushing beauty fled,
They hide their sorrows in an humble shed.

Such are the woes by childish folly wrought;
Such is experience, ah! too dearly bought!
To cool the fever of the youthful brain,
Ye fond and thoughtless, read—let me not sing in vain.

Register of Marriages.

WIDOW WILMOT.

Dame Wilmot was a farmer's widow meek,
The rose of summer faded on her cheek:
But still the lustre of her sparkling eye
Seem'd like the sun in autumn's cloudless sky.
Ten times had winter howl'd around her head,
Since David Wilmot mingled with the dead.
His call was sudden, and his death deplored;
The rich esteem'd him, and the poor adored;
Of gentle manners, independent mind,
His hand was liberal, and his heart was kind;
The counsellor of youth, the friend of age,
His name was blazon'd fair on Virtue's page;
And in my flock, when David Wilmot died,
I felt a blank not easily supplied.

He left one son his cultured farm to heir,
A minor still, besides three daughters fair,
In nonage all—left to no guardian's trust,
For he was hurried to his kindred dust:
But he died well, as cits and bankers say,
And left his family in a thriving way;
His farm well stock'd, with store of treasured wealth,
The children stout, the widow rich in health.
Dame Wilmot (ever seen, in wedded life,
The careful mother and the bustling wife)
Sat with her children, plunged in grief profound:
But Time, that brings a balm for every wound,
Removed the load which press'd upon her mind,
And bade her live for those still left behind;
She wiped her tears, the rising sigh suppress'd;
For business, with its crowding cares, distress'd.
Her debts discharged, and each incumbrance clear'd,
Beyond her hopes the surplus stock appear'd;
And still she hoped, beneath her guardian charge,
To see each annual balance yet enlarge.
For this she rose with morning's earliest light,
Her eye was everywhere till closing night:

Whether the summer scorch'd or winter froze,
The first to rise, the last to seek repose.
Thus time stole on; and John, her only son,
Had reach'd the long-wish'd age of twenty-one;
And, farther her maternal heart to cheer,
Her daughters now in beauty's bloom appear.
But few without a sigh have power resign'd;
It sheds a secret pleasure o'er the mind:
From dowager queen, down to the yeoman's dame,
The joy is equal, and the sigh the same;
And Widow Wilmot, stript of her command,
Laid down the reins with cold reluctant hand.
Her daughters, too, were grown like may-poles tall;
She felt her pleasure with their romping pall;
She thought it strange "Mamma" from such to hear,
And "Mother" was as hateful to her ear.
Erewhile, the maidens were her joy and pride;
But now she loath'd to find them at her side.
Thus, housewives say, at seasons hens are seen
To peck and chace their chickens from the green;
For though Dame Wilmot's fortieth year was past,
She round her still a twinkling eye could cast.

Ten years of widowhood had stole behind,
And no such dreams disturb'd the woman's mind:
But she was then employ'd in worldly care,—
She now was idle, and had cash to spare;
And Fancy will the vacant mind employ
In fairy dreams of fond ideal joy;
Can paint anew youth's dear enraptured reign,
And whisper, "We can live it o'er again."
So thought Dame Wilmot, when her mirror show'd
A cheek where late and lingering beauty glow'd.
'Twas not, 'tis true, the blush that youth bestows—
The glowing richness of the half-blown rose;
But, while she gazed, she thought her face might charm,
And dreams of former days would all her bosom warm.

Frank Dickson was a father's only child,
And born when Fortune's sun serenely smiled.
Parental fondness, to each failing blind,
Believed that pertness spoke superior mind:
Indulged, caress'd, the lad was sent to school,
And from the college came, not quite a fool;
For he could Logic chop and Latin speak,
And read my weekly text in pot-hook Greek.

He every Sunday sought the house of prayer,
And most devout was his appearance there:
In penitential chant, or cheerful song,
His voice resounded o'er the assembled throng,—
In *this* it rose, with full-toned mellow swell;
In *that*, with melting cadence, softly fell;
And then, so much expression in his face,
He seem'd a pattern in our holy place.
Few could with him in form and mein compare;
His stature tall, and graceful was his air;
No essenced fop, his dress was neat and trim,
His shoulders broad, full chest, and well-turn'd limb;
The piercing lustre of his keen dark eye
Was like the bird's that braves the sun-bright sky;
Of smooth address, and eloquent of tongue,
To these externals add—the lad was young:
Such was Frank Dickson forty years ago;
What he is now, some future page may show.
Dame Wilmot met him in a joyous hour,
When jest and frolic flew with licensed power;
'Twas at a wedding-feast, where all were gay—
Courtship and love the topics of the day.

He was engaging, courteously polite;
And unperceived stole on the shades of night:
With mirth surrounded, and the circling glass,
The light-wing'd hours like minutes o'er us pass;
The purple tide flows brisk in every vein,
And Prudence rules the tongue with slacken'd rein.
Frank saw the widow safe to her abode;
And some folks say they linger'd on the road.
Why should I here prolong my limping strain?
Each with the other pleased, they met again.
On Rumour's wings the tale was blazed abroad.
I paused, and felt the duty which I owed
As shepherd, placed o'er all my flock to watch,
Bade me prevent this wild preposterous match.
I sought the widow, and with plainness spoke.
She thank'd me kindly,—said 'twas all a joke:
But, though her tongue the gossip-tale denied,
I mark'd a blush which Nature could not hide:
Methought her sparkling eyes, too, seem'd to say,
"Preach as you please, I will my heart obey!"
Frank well was skill'd in flattery's pleasing art,
And knew the way to win a widow's heart:

She might assume the matron's stately pride,
But had no fears, no virgin blush to hide;
Ere long, Love found them in a melting mood,
And they before me at the altar stood!

Love, said I?—'Twas a passion less sublime!
In both a folly, bordering on a crime;
For, since his reign on earth was first begun,
Love never match'd the mother with the son.
I grant, where principle and prudence meet,
The bridegroom virtuous and the bride discreet,
That both may lead a calm and easy life;
But not what Nature meant for man and wife!

She blush'd and simper'd as her hand he took;
But careless ease was in her bridegroom's look.
I mark'd with sorrow his indifferent air,
While I with fervour pour'd the nuptial prayer;
'Twas not, indeed, the prayer of faith with me;
From what I saw, I fear'd for what might be!
And when the bride was from the altar led,
I thought Misfortune hover'd o'er her head.

The torch of Hymen gleam'd, and both were bless'd—
He of a wife and treasured wealth possess'd;

Fond and confiding in the favour'd youth,
She trusted all to honour, love, and truth—
Gold, bills, and bonds, all given to his control,
The longest liver to possess the whole.
Two months or so, young Four-and-Twenty's arms
Were fondly clasp'd round Five-and-Forty's charms;
And Mrs Dickson bask'd in fairy bower,
Her doting love still kinder every hour.
Time fann'd her flame, but cool'd her husband's down:
By business call'd, he oftener went to town;
But still the fire would in her bosom burn,
As sad she sigh'd, and watch'd his late return.

One year of love had scarce their union crown'd,
When Frank at home by day was seldom found;
While every art, in vain, Dame Dickson tried,—
She simper'd, ogled, reason'd, smiled, and sigh'd.
At morn he left her, with a careless air,
Abroad to roam, but seldom told her where;
And she would mope alone till past midnight,
Sometimes would sit till morn's returning light:
Then would she heave the sad reproachful sigh,
The big tear trembling in her downcast eye;

While Frank, with countenance composed and cool,
Would calmly say, she was a snivelling fool.
When man and wife in bitter words reply,
Respect will cease, and cold contempt is nigh:
Then slighted Love, if Love has e'er been there,
Takes leave for ever of the hapless pair;
And in his place, fell Jealousy succeeds,
Whose fangs strike deeper as the victim bleeds.
The deadly venom fired Dame Dickson's breast,
And every glance the dæmon's power confess'd.
Thus, while she felt her heart with anguish wrung,
Reproach flow'd copious from her fluent tongue.
Frank felt he had no measures now to keep,
And, all unmoved, beheld his partner weep—
For ever set his mild domestic sun:
Her sullen gloom and stormy rage to shun,
With sensual bliss he soothed his sordid soul—
The gambler's table and the toper's bowl;
And beauty more congenial to his mind,
A syren fair, whose smile was ever kind.
His slighted wife, thus shunn'd, despised, and scorn'd,
Now raved in phrensy, now in anguish mourn'd,

And sigh'd, impatient for the welcome hour
When Death should free her from a tyrant's power.
Nor less the husband's anxious wish to part,—
He hoped that pride and scorn would break her heart.
But both were doom'd their folly to deplore;
And, thirty years of sin and suffering o'er,
Dame Dickson's weary head was laid at rest,
And Frank his freedom and her wealth possess'd.
His future fate may afterwards appear
Amidst the annals of some later year.

Register of Burials.

ANDREW DARLING.

That green sod covers Andrew Darling's head,
For whom no sigh was heaved, no tear was shed.
His rich relations, in the parish round,
On him had, like his early fortunes, frown'd.
At school, it by the teacher was confess'd,
Of all his scholars Andrew read the best:
On Ovid, Horace, and the Mantuan Bard,
He ponder'd nightly, with a fond regard.

When call'd to join his father on the farm,
He thought with rapture on "each rural charm:"
But Andrew's father farm'd by other rules
Than Virgil's Georgics and the classic schools:
Thus, sire and son opinion would divide;
And still with Andrew, Maro must decide.
Their wranglings oft to keen contention led;
But other whims soon fill'd the scholar's head.

He met Bell Modely at the village fair,
A sprightly damsel, with a jaunty air;
Her eyes were bright, good nature in her face,
Each motion easy, and she danced with grace;
Her slender ankle, in silk stocking neat,
As o'er the floor she tripp'd, with fairy feet,
With fascination fix'd the scholar's gaze,
As light she bounded through the mirthful maze.
With hinds and village-maids, of manners free,
Restraint was banish'd—all was jollity.
But Bell in modesty superior shone;
In dress and manners graceful, moved alone.
She was a wench of admiration vain,—
Her pride to have some danglers in her train;

The more the better, was her maxim still:
Her beauty lured them; and the maid had skill
To kindle hopes, and still preserve her heart:
The fire she felt not, she could well impart;
For she could ogle, trifle, smile, and toy,
Now blushing fondness, next reserved and coy;
Could lure the bashful and restrain the bold,
And over both her sure dominion hold.
Such was the flirt, the gay but cold coquette,
Who now had Andrew in her silken net.
He watch'd her motions—join'd her on the road,
While every nerve with tingling rapture glow'd;
And begg'd the happiness her steps to tend,
And see her safely to her journey's end.
With well-feign'd modesty and virgin pride
She long refused—reluctantly complied:
'Twas three long miles; he thought them scarcely one,
And deeply sigh'd to find his pleasure done.
How long they stood, while parting at the stile,
How soft her blush, how sweet her dimpling smile,
He never told, and none was witness there:
Home he return'd, to dream, but not despair.

No longer now was lofty Virgil read;
Bell Modely, Love, and Ovid fill'd his head;
And while behind the trenching plough he strode,
Romantic scenes and sunbright halos glow'd
Above, around him; Fancy's magic wand
Led him in Love's delightful fairy land!
Still it was but the fever of the brain;
His heart untouch'd, had never felt the pain.
Such is the passion love-sick boys affect:
The reins of Fancy laid on Folly's neck,
Away she canters, in a devious track,
The giddy boy light bounding on her back;
Till in the wild-goose chace, begun to tire,
She, founder'd, falls, and flings him in the mire.
Thus Andrew rode, careering on his way,
While Love's Elysium fair before him lay;
Bell Modely's eye the bright, the polar star,
To guide his course through trackless fields afar.
Love in his head, and Ovid on his tongue,
His passion in poetic strains was sung;
The song display'd his memory's treasured store,
A splendid mass of mythologic lore;

And there, above each fair of classic fame,
In sounding verse, stood Bella Modely's name—
As Hebe lovely, with Minerva's air,
Chaste as Diana, and as Venus fair!
Could she resist such soft and flattering lays,
Or scorn a lover who in verse could praise?
Though Bell thought reading but romantic stuff—
Herself the subject, these were well enough:
Yet had they flow'd to some sweet rural air,
"The Cottage Maid," or "Jockey to the Fair,"
Her name might then have o'er the parish rung,
Her praise the theme of every ploughman's tongue!
So thought the fair, but on her poet smiled;
He sigh'd, she blush'd, and all his doubts beguiled.
Again Love led him on the joyous way,
When golden twilight gleam'd her parting ray:
As Andrew lightly cross'd the woodland sere,
The sound of secret converse echoed near;
As on his ear the murmur'd whisper fell,
He paused and listen'd—sure 'twas lovely Bell!
Light o'er the grass, with stealing steps he trode,
Then, cautious, crept along the flowery sod:

Beneath a shrub, in silent ambush laid,
He saw before him, in the secret shade,
Bell Modely lean on Farmer Barton's breast,
His brawny arm around her slender waist:
He twined a riband in her flowing hair,
And softly said, "Now hear me, lovely fair!
Like Andrew Darling, I cannot rehearse
Your matchless charms and praise in sounding verse;
But I can love;—and now, these charms to deck,
Come, let me bind this trinket round your neck;
And when you see it in the morning shine,
Say which becomes you, Andrew's gift or mine?"
Her slender neck the glittering toy embraced;
Her braided hair his figured riband graced;
She smiled; he did—what Andrew never dared—
And on her ripe lip found his rich reward!
Then, with a sigh, "Could I like Andrew sing,
Your name, my love, should o'er our valleys ring!"
"Speak not of him! I loathe his name to hear!
His rhyming nonsense pains my wearied ear:
I read it once, before 'twas seen by you;
And never since, nor e'er intend to do!

Then tease me not with him—a boy from school!
He's poor—a pedant—poet—and a fool!"
Contempt, like water, cools the fiercest flame;
And Andrew sicken'd at Miss Modely's name:
But still the scholar's head was far from sound,
And beauty's glance was sure his peace to wound.
He saw Eliza—sought her heart to gain—
But not by song and soft Ovidian strain;
He tried, with studious care, her taste to find,
What present most would please the fair one's mind:
She was a dreamer—and a lottery prize,
A thousand pounds, in sleep, had bless'd her eyes;
And she was sure her dreams were always true;
But niggard Fate forbade her fortune to pursue.
The hint was plain—a ticket Andrew bought,
A free-will offering to Love's altar brought:
As bishops blush when they refuse a see,
Or lawyers leering at the golden fee,
So blush'd Eliza, simper'd, smiled, and took
The gift of Fortune with delighted look;
And said, with pleasure sparkling in her eyes,
"Dear Sir, 'tis mutual, whether blank or prize."

"No—this, or that—your heart, your hand is mine!
To these my hopes, my wishes I confine;
In wealth or poverty you are my bride,
And death alone our hearts shall e'er divide!"

Time speeds along, and Fortune's wheel goes round—
The ticket 's drawn—a prize!—ten thousand pounds!
On wings of Love delighted Andrew flew,
The gate of Eden opening on his view.
"Come, generous friend!" she cried, "receive your part."
"No—all is mine, in loved Eliza's heart!"
"What! have it all?" with playful smile she said;
"Yes," Andrew cried, and clasp'd the blushing maid;
"Come, name the day that shall our hands unite!"
She tapp'd his cheek, and said, "No—not to-night!"
Love led him to Eliza twice a week,
And still he saw fresh roses on her cheek;
But ere a month—a little month had fled,
Dick Trap Eliza to the altar led!
This was too much, and more than man could bear,
And Andrew roam'd, his heart indifferent where;
But studied so to steer his wayward flight,
That woman's smile no more should blast his sight:

Then, in resentment for his fate severe,
Enroll'd himself a British Grenadier,
Cross'd the Atlantic, with the Yankees fought,
And toil'd, and bled, and barren laurels sought;
But step-dame Fortune ever proved unkind—
He home return'd, but left a leg behind!

A hut he rear'd, deep in the heathy glen,
Sequester'd far from the abodes of men.
His Chelsea pension all his wants supplied—
For independence was his boasted pride:
By labour form'd, and unremitting toil,
A little garden graced the ungenerous soil,
In which his vegetable store was seen,—
The swelling cabbage, and the colewort green;
Potatoes clustering round the genial root,
Carrots and parsnips rich, that downward shoot.
This cultured spot, with Nature's bounty stored,
Spread wealth and plenty on his homely board:
A ditch and fence the whole encompass'd round,
With verdant twigs of pliant osiers crown'd;
Of these, with cunning hand, he baskets made—
A skilful artist in his humble trade;

So neat, so light, he found a brisk demand,
And constant labour for his thrifty hand.
For workshop, kitchen, bed-room, parlour, hall,
His hut, twelve feet by twenty, served for all;
One window glazed, four little panes display'd,
A boarded wicket sometimes lent its aid;
A crazy chair and stool, a pallet bed,
Beneath with straw, above with rug o'erspread;
A deal-board shelf the cupboard's place supplied,
And pendant hung, by twisted osiers tied.
No Sunday suit was in his wardrobe found;
His dress the same, each varying season round;
His jerkin patch'd, the lapse of time had scorn'd,
A cat-skin cap his shaggy brows adorn'd;
With thick, black, bristling beard, and visage grim,
He hopp'd to market on his wooden limb.
His neighbours smiled and pitied—strangers gazed,
And all agreed that Andrew's wits were crazed;
For dark misanthropy had chill'd his mind,
But, chief, his hatred swell'd at womankind:
No female form durst enter Andrew's door,
Nor woman's work supply his scanty store!

When Death's cold hand lay heavy on his breast,
Old Bridget came, and, kind, her cordials press'd;
With indignation in his death-glazed eye,
"Begone!" he cried; "leave me in peace to die!
And if you wish my troubled spirit rest,
Let none of female kind my corpse molest!
Too long has woman crazed this aching head—
Let not her meddling hands disturb me dead!"
She press'd the cup; with red resentment fired,
He, writhing, gasp'd, and, with a groan, expired!

So lived neglected, and so died forlorn,
The dupe of fancied love and woman's scorn:
In youth, a weak, romantic, hot-brain'd fool,
Of vain coquettes and sordid minds the tool;
In age, a misanthrope—his passion's slave—
Despised in life—forgotten in the grave!

CHARACTERS.

No. III.

The traveller doom'd in trackless wilds to stray,
Though rugged rocks perhaps impede his way,
Though noxious weeds offend, and thorns may wound,
Yet fragrant herbs and blooming flowers are found
To shed their sweets, 'midst tangling brambles vile,
And cheer the wanderer with their simple smile:
Even 'midst Arabia's thirsty sands, are seen
A cooling fountain and a patch of green;
The twinkling star still sheds the loveliest light,
That shines surrounded with the shades of night.
As o'er the Register I cast my eye,
I see some bright spots in a cloudy sky;

It tells of charms that grace the guileless train,
The blooming daughters of the rural plain,
Alike removed from wild, tumultuous joy,
And rankling cares, that every bliss destroy:
Such scenes no high-wrought feelings can excite;
Yet I relate with joy—you'll read with calm delight.

Register of Births.

JOHN MARTIN.

John Martin was a widow's eldest child,
Her early hopes by later days beguiled;
For while her cheek glow'd in meridian bloom,
Her husband sunk untimely to the tomb;
Alone, neglected, in the world she stood,
The mourning mother of an orphan brood;
For infant Anna to her bosom clung,
While John and Susan on her apron hung.
To Heaven she look'd, but not with hopeful eye;
Her heart accused the Ruler of the sky,
Who had her husband from her bosom torn,
And left her thus in bloom of life forlorn,

With helpless babes and poverty oppress'd;
Thus discontent deprived her soul of rest:
Repining, now she droop'd, despondent, sad,
Forgot the days in which her heart was glad;
Nor prattling infant's lisp, nor playful smile,
Could banish care or discontent beguile;
Sometimes indulging, in her deep chagrin,
The impious wish, that they had never been!
For them she toil'd, without maternal care;
Her heart was cold—no mother's fondness there.
About the streets, in summer months, they sprawl'd—
In winter, soil'd with dust and ashes, crawl'd;
Their tatter'd weeds unpatch'd, through sheer neglect,
While matted locks waved round each urchin's neck,
And naked feet, bare arms, and unwash'd face,
Conspired to hide each budding infant grace:
The mother, too, now wore a slattern air,
No more remembering that her face was fair;
For she, because she might not all she would,
With careless scorn neglected what she could;
Hence was her home a den of things unclean,
The vilest hovel in the hamlet seen.

An epidemic fever raged around,
And in her cot a ready entrance found;
Sick, on a loathsome couch, her infants lay,
Death hovering near, and waiting for his prey!
He seized young Anna at the morning hour;
Ere sunset Susan own'd the victor's power;
Unsated seem'd the stern, relentless foe,
Who linger'd still, on John to deal the blow.
If man the still small voice refuse to hear,
Heaven's thunders sometimes burst upon his ear!
She who had counted Providence unkind,
Felt something like remorse creep o'er her mind;
And sat with folded hands, and gasp'd for breath,
Beside her lovely daughters, cold in death,
With fix'd eye gazing on that infant son,
Whose life's last ebbing sand seem'd nearly run;—
Till she, erewhile the victim of despair,
With bended knees to Heaven address'd her prayer:
"Father!" she cried, "low humbled in the dust,
My guilty heart now owns thy judgments just!
Too long have I thy providence forgot,
And, discontented, murmur'd at my lot:

Now let my humble prayer ascend to Heaven,
And be my heart's ingratitude forgiven;
I bend submissive to thy high decree,
And, though unworthy, place my trust in thee!
Teach me to bow to what thy hand has done;
And, Father! in thy mercy, spare my son!"

The contrite anguish of a chasten'd mind,
The prayer of guilt with humble hope combined,
Arose to Heaven. Her son to health restored,
Time shed contenment round her narrow board;
Each day gave beauty to his rising form,
Which soon became her shelter in the storm;
For health and vigour strung his brawny arm,
And o'er his face youth shed each manly charm;
His mother's stay—she felt her hope and joy,
Her bliss below were centred in her boy.
But John had soon to heave the heartfelt sigh,
And o'er his mother bend the tearful eye;
For she, oppress'd with lingering sickness, pined,
By chilling ague to her couch confined.

A nurse was wanting—Ellen Butler came
To watch and sooth the widow's shatter'd frame.

She had a tender heart, and gentle hand,
Her face was comely, and her accent bland.
She nursed the widow with a daughter's care,
And in her joys and sorrows seem'd to share.
John toil'd, that he might for their wants provide,
With filial love—his pleasure and his pride;
Saw Ellen's kindness every wish supply,
And oft in secret gazed with glistening eye;
Till something whisper'd, her enchanting smile
Could daily labour of its weight beguile,—
That he could firmer stand in Fortune's strife,
Would Ellen Butler bless his arms for life.

There is a blush which warms the glowing cheek,
That can with eloquence in silence speak;
Love's language sparkles in the melting eye,
And softly whispers in the secret sigh:
These told the tale that both had tried to hide,—
And Ellen Butler was John Martin's bride.

With downy feet twelve joyous months had fled;
The torch of Hymen bless'd the nuptial bed;
The hour was come when John had hope to share
A father's joy—a husband's fondest care!

"Come!" said a matron friend, "I wish you joy!
Two blooming daughters and a lovely boy!"
John felt his cheek with love and fondness glow;
But soon a gathering cloud stole o'er his brow.
One pledge of love though he had long'd to see,
He thought himself profusely bless'd with three!
Ponder'd on Nature's now increased demands,
And keenly felt, the labour of his hands
Would prove inadequate for their supply;
On Ellen fondly smiled, and heaved a sigh;
Beheld his mother on her couch reclined,
And deep despondency stole o'er his mind.
The watchful widow, from her weary bed,
Beheld the workings of his soul, and said,
"My son, do not at Providence repine;
Let not thy mother's early guilt be thine!
Still let thy heart with pious trust confide,
And with the Patriarch say, 'God will provide!'
You know my crime, my penitential tears,
The humble hope that gilds my later years;
And in your children, now, methinks I see
Susan and Anne again restored to me.

Such be their names; and learn, my son, to trust
That God is merciful, and wise, and just."
The father brought these triple gifts of love,
And join'd my prayer for blessings from above;
It was no cold, nor careless formal prayer,—
I saw the parent's humble heart was there:
With folded hands, and Heaven-imploring eye,
Next Ellen kneel'd, and offered thanks on high.
Their prayers were heard: With courage undismayed,
John toil'd, and still a cheerful face displayed.
His children wean'd—a rich old miser died,
To Ellen by the ties of blood allied,
Whose bliss in life was still to have and hold,
And made no will, lest that should waste his gold.
By right of law, the whole to Ellen came,
His nearest relative in kin and name:
Now, John and Ellen both this truth maintain,
That they who trust in Heaven, shall never trust in vain!

Register of Marriages.

GEORGE MIDDLETON.

When I was young, all in the parish knew
Squire Middleton, nick-named the Savage Jew!
Whose heart was narrow, as his lands were wide;
Who never thought of Heaven, and man defied!
Poor, haughty, quarrelsome, and fond of law,
Would litigate and wrangle for a straw.
His son and heir was George, an only child,
In Sharpley the attorney's den exiled;
His father placed him there to save expense,
And timely learn the art of self-defence;
Hoped George would soon with skill conduct his pleas,
And save a fortune in the shape of fees.
For Lawyer Sharpley was the man to teach,
By quirks of law, to cheat and overreach;
When to demur, protract, or shift a cause,
How to invalidate by legal flaws;
Yet he was shrewd, his head was clear and sound,
His judgment safe, deep skill'd in law profound:

With such a tutor for his daily guide,
The Squire had hopes he might in George confide.
Old Gaffer Strawbridge, on the neighbouring farm,
Was hale in years, in worldly wealth was warm:
His daughter Flora had been sent to town,
A rustic beauty in her grogram gown,
To form her manners, and improve her mind,
With art, and elegance, and taste refined;
For Gaffer hoped to see his daughter soar
More high than ever Strawbridge did before:
He was Squire Middleton his landlord's friend,
Could give good counsel, and had cash to lend;
The Squire still found his purse a ready bank,
Which lured him on to many a wrangling prank,
Till he had mortgaged nearly all his lands,
The deeds secure in Farmer Strawbridge' hands!
But Fate, while shone the Squire's malignant star,
Involved both parties in litigious war;
The farmer's fancy fondly grasp'd the thrush,
While still it hopp'd and warbled in the bush;
Hence he the clauses of his lease despised,
And plough'd, and cropp'd, just as his whims advised;

Such wanton freedoms could not be allow'd,
For still the Squire, though pinch'd and poor, was proud;
That poverty might here his pride augment—
Each being obstinate, to law they went.

The cause went slowly, but their wrath rose fast,
Fermented, fumed, and fixed in hate at last.
Meanwhile, their children, guiltless of the strife,
Alive to all the young delights of life,
Felt none that could with richer zest repay
The various tasks and labours of the day,
Than fondly meeting for an evening walk,
Of friends, and home, and rural scenes to talk;
When George went out, to taste the twilight air,
The sky still gloom'd, if Flora was not there;
For her no health breathed in the morning breeze,
If George was absent,—Nature fail'd to please:
Thus, mighty Love had pierced their bosoms through,
Before their guileless hearts his presence knew.

Now George went home, when seven long years had fled,
With love-sick heart, and law-encumber'd head;
Some time before him Flora had return'd,
Deploring wrath that still intensely burn'd;

By stealth the lovers met—by gossips seen,
Their meeting told—rage fired each father's mien;
"Degenerate son!" cried the indignant Squire,
"Why can you with my greatest foe conspire?
My mind is fix'd—you meet that wench no more;
Or, learn to stalk, like stranger, past my door!"
Old Gaffer Strawbridge, in a gentler mood,
Thus spoke his will, while Flora blushing stood;
"Hey, lass!—what's this I'm told?—strange news indeed!
George Middleton—poor girl!—more haste than speed!
Dear Flora, know—his father's dish'd—undone—
And would you wed a bankrupt beggar's son?
An old and obstinate, litigious ass,
Whose lands are mine, ere many years can pass;
Bills, bonds, mortgages, unredeem'd, unpaid—
Hold up your head!—what!—is the wench afraid?
Hast lost a husband?—wait till I foreclose—
Yes, yes, I'll wring the stubborn rascal's nose!
Till then, keep heart—I'll find a proper mate;
But mind me—George I scorn—his father hate!"
Parental pride thus raised itself above
The soft, yet stern omnipotence of Love:

In sad dilemma stood the hapless pair;
But youth is not the season for despair.
George had a friend at India's Council-board;
He told his tale; that friend his case deplored;
"Cheer up!" said he, "I'll send you to Bombay—
Take leave of Flora, and make haste away."
The lovers met—explain'd their hopes and fears;
Pledged faith—embraced—and mingled sighs and tears.
His friend good counsel, gold, and letters gave—
The wind was fair—George bounded o'er the wave;
By day he read, and conn'd Hindostanee,
At night slept sound, and dream'd—of bliss to be.
Arrived—Fate gave a friend and patron kind,
With powerful hand, warm heart, and generous mind;
His fortune prosper'd, time stole softly by,
Wealth flow'd apace, and Hope illumed his eye:
Ten years had pass'd—and near the hapless hour,
When Farmer Strawbridge, with a vulture's power,
Could, by foreclosure, pounce upon his prey;
Time speeds his flight, and brings the fatal day.
Deep plunged in grief, that morn the Squire arose,
And mutter'd wrathful, while he mourn'd his woes;

While Farmer Strawbridge snapp'd his thumbs, and sung,
Till every echo in his mansion rung.
"Now, wench," he cried, "haste! clear that clouded brow,
And let your cheek bright as your fortune glow;
The hour is come!—this day makes Beechgrove mine!
And you, my Flora, shall its heiress shine!"
Untasted breakfast stood before the Squire;
A crackling log was blazing on the fire;
Fierce on the windows beat the rattling hail,
His ancient elms were groaning in the gale;
He view'd the dark clouds with delighted eye,
His brow still darker than the lowering sky:
"Howl on, ye storms!" he cried, "your fury shed,
And hurl these towers on my devoted head;
Deep buried in their ruins let me lie,
Hid from my hated foe's exulting eye!"
He could no more; for phrensy chain'd his tongue—
Wild flash'd his eye—the door was open flung—
A stranger enter'd—grasp'd his wither'd hands,
The wondering Squire in mute amazement stands!
"Dear father! speak—and say I find you well!"
"What!—George, my son—to ring my funeral knell!

Oh! cruel Fate!—why thus imbitter death?"
His pale lip quiver'd, and he gasp'd for breath.
"No, father, live; your deep distress I know,
I have the means and will to ward the blow;
Say but the word—that you forget, forgive,
And will in peace with Farmer Strawbridge live—
Will smile to see me take his daughter's hand,
And I of each incumberance clear your land!
If not—farewell!—again to India's shore
I shape my course—you see my face no more!"
"Dear son! no longer I with fate contend;
Why should I mar what I want power to mend?"
This conquest gain'd, George to the farmer's pass'd;—
Old Gaffer Strawbridge stared, and look'd aghast,
As fell the fastness of his hope and trust,
His air-built fabric levell'd in the dust.
"Come, friend," cried George, "that brow from sadness clear:
You know your daughter to my heart is dear;
For her I've seas and scorching suns defied;
And lovely Flora now shall be my bride.
Our faith is pledged; and she is now of age,
And freely can her heart and hand engage,

Yet would not rashly your good-will forego:
Come, then, your blessing with her hand bestow;
From memory blot the past—let wrangling cease—
My sire and you shall live in lasting peace."
"What!—hey!—queer folks—strange doings, on my troth!
My daughter take—Heaven's blessing on you both!"
The pair before me at the altar bow'd,
While Flora's cheek in ripen'd beauty glow'd;
The glance of love beam'd in her bridegroom's eye,
His face deep bronzed beneath a torrid sky;
Their hands were join'd, their union bless'd above,
If man may judge from calm domestic love.
The angry fathers, even while hands they shook,
Held down their heads with half-averted look;
But death long since has hush'd their wrathful pride,
Laid them at rest, and slumbering side by side;
Their children, blest in Beechgrove's shady bowers,
In love and calm delight still pass the hours;
Their evening sun descends in cloudless skies,
While fairer scenes in distant prospect rise.

Register of Burials.

MARY GORDON.

See where the yew-tree rears its sombre head,
It waves o'er Mary Gordon's grassy bed;
My feeble pen would fain that fame prolong,
Which claims the meed of more exalted song.
Young Angus Gordon lived beyond the Tay,
Where Grampian heights their snow-clad heads display;
Born in some lonely glen, some cot obscure,
The child of poverty—where all are poor:
Yet Love can hover where the heath-bells bloom,
As light as where the citron breathes perfume;
Euphemia smiled, in youth and rural charms,
And blush'd a bride, in Angus Gordon's arms.
But, in the North, Rebellion's flag unfurled,
On Brunswick's prince her proud defiance hurled;
While loyal clans for him unsheath'd the sword,
And vassals follow'd with their feudal lord:
Young Angus mingled in the warlike train,
And fearless fought on Lothian's fertile plain:

Euphemia, still a fond and faithful wife,
Undaunted, follow'd to the field of strife;
And light first dawn'd on Mary Gordon's eye,
Where war's loud thunders roar'd and dimm'd the sky.
The soldier saw, and clasp'd his lovely child,
Kiss'd the pale mother's cheek, and soothed and smiled.
The bugle blew—he donn'd his arms again,
And fearless mingled on the battle plain.
The conflict raged, and fierce the direful shock;
But Angus stood, firm as the sea-beat rock;
A sword was pointed at his chieftain's breast—
He forward sprung, the weapon to arrest—
It pierced him deep—Life quiver'd in her seat—
He groan'd, and fell before his leader's feet!
"My wife! my child!" the dying hero said,
As on the green sod sunk his fainting head.
"I will protect!" the grateful chieftain cried.
"Enough!—may Heaven—"—the soldier smiled, and died!
Fatigue and danger with her griefs combined,
His loved Euphemia mourn'd not long behind:
The chieftain clasp'd the orphan in his arms,
A blooming daughter, rich in infant charms—

"Poor innocent! thy parents died for me!
I must—I will, thy friend and father be:
We must not part; no rival hireling's care
Shall leave thee pining in the desert air."
He said; and infant Mary home was sent,
Too young to feel, too guileless to lament.

Beloved by all, and shelter'd from the storm,
Each coming year improved her lovely form:
When seventeen years had glided softly by,
Fair was her cheek, and mild her bright blue eye;
Her mien was mark'd with dignity and grace,
Each feature spoke in her expressive face—
That face, a faithful index to her mind,
Where all that 's lovely in her sex combined.
Her patron, now with lingering years oppress'd,
When slowly sinking to the hour of rest,
Spoke of the father's love, that saved from death,
And bless'd the daughter with his latest breath.

In William's eyes, the eldest son and heir,
Mary had seem'd beyond all others fair:
He took no pains his growing love to hide;
His mother saw, and sore it gall'd her pride;

And prouder still, his haughty sisters' scorn,
To think of one so poor, so humbly born;
Aunts, uncles join'd—a rich, high-minded race,
And pray'd to save them from this sad disgrace:
They reason'd, threaten'd, raved, and wept, in vain;
Nought could the purpose of his heart restrain;
Till, in his absence, Mary forth was driven—
Without a home—with not a stay, but Heaven.
With aching heart, he sought and found the fair,
Who owed her safety to a peasant's care.

To shield and sooth her in her deep distress,
Give proof of love and truth and tenderness,
He said, "Fear not, dear maid!—in me confide—
My faith is pledged—consent and be my bride!"
"No, William, no!" the blushing maid replies,
While tears stand trembling in her glistening eyes:
"While you're a minor this can never be:
When Time has left your heart and actions free,
Should then no nobler-born, no richer maid,
In brighter charms and lovelier grace array'd,
Your love demand, your fond affection share,
And Mary still be worth her William's care,—

If he can stoop so low, he may command
His Mary's duty, with her heart and hand."

Time wheel'd his flight within his circling sphere,
And closed the lover's long-expected year;
With fondest love the nuptial knot was tied,
And home was led the beauteous, blushing bride:
But mother, sisters, look'd with haughty mien,
And cold contempt on every face was seen;
His rich relations glanced with scornful eye,—
If chance they met, they pass'd him proudly by.
Though no complaint flow'd from her gentle tongue,
He saw his Mary's heart with sadness wrung:
Despising those who made her bosom bleed,
He sold his lands, and proudly cross'd the Tweed;
For though his native glen to him was dear,
He heaved a sigh, and shed a parting tear;
Like our primeval father, steel'd his mind,
For woman left his paradise behind.

At Wilton Park he fix'd his loved retreat,
And found felicity most pure and sweet;
For Mary saw the sacrifice he made,
And felt such love could never be repaid;

Yet, in her best, she studied still to please,
With fond affection, and good-natured ease.
As when in sunbeams sits the spotless dove,
Well-chosen emblem of connubial love,
The changing colours on her glossy neck,
The glowing rainbow's brightest tints reflect,—
From green to gold, from pale to purple hue,
For ever lovely, and for ever new,—
Such were the charms which William loved to trace,
With fond delight, in Mary's witching face;
The artless smile which play'd around her mouth,
The modest blush of innocence and truth,
The lambent glances of her guileless eye,
Where little loves in ambush seem'd to lie,
The gentle sigh that heaved her swelling breast,—
These more than words her secret soul confess'd:
When to her voice her spinnet softly rung,
The melting accents of her tuneful tongue,
Light madrigal, or strain to pity dear,
Could prompt a smile, or draw the tender tear;
The rich expression o'er her features stole,
And spoke the boundless treasures of her soul;

Soft o'er her face the changing graces pass'd,
And all could charm; but loveliest still the last!
Thus, long and bright, their day unclouded shone,
Love's purple wings waved round his golden throne;
The poor, with sickness, age, and want oppress'd,
Were in their counsels and their bounty bless'd;
For still they felt it pleasure to impart
The gifts of Heaven, to sooth the fainting heart.
But brightest summer suns must cease to shine;
Time will the fondest ties of love untwine;
The stoutest oak that in the forest stands,
Is doom'd to fall beneath the woodman's hands;
And William, crown'd with virtues, ripe in age,
His part perform'd, forsook this earthly stage:
His Mary mourn'd, but felt Heav'n had been kind,
And to its will her widow'd heart resign'd;
For she could still, with fond maternal eyes,
Behold her sons and daughters round her rise;
Their day of life and happiness begun,
Like buds expanding to the morning sun;
Their love her comfort, and their minds her care;
She look'd to Heaven, for her best hopes were there.

But fairest flowers will on their stalks decay,
And Mary mingled with her kindred clay;
Yet, as the rose, when all its bloom is fled,
Can still around a pleasing odour shed,
Such is the fragrance of that spotless fame
Which fondly hallows Mary Gordon's name.

CHARACTERS.

No. IV.

Register of Baptisms.

TOM WESTON.

What great events, how vast the change appears,
In the short retrospect of thirty years!
The fate of nations, and the march of mind,
Leave lagging ages thrown in shades behind:
For keen reflection, what a fruitful theme,
Rich as the fictions of a fairy dream!
Historians, sages, poets, find a scene
In every court, in every village green.

Tom Weston was a studious, thinking lad,
Whose humble virtues made his parents glad;
His talents, too, perhaps increased their joy,
For all who knew, admired and loved the boy,

Till known o'er all the parish, gossip Fame
Soon to the Rector told Tom Weston's name.
This Rector, in sequester'd college bred,
Had store of learned lumber in his head;
But, void of taste, and careless of display,
The mingled mass in rich confusion lay;
The laws of nature, and the works of art—
All things he knew—except the human heart;
Inclined with faithfulness his flock to feed;
With will to drive, but wanting skill to lead;
Upright in conduct, as in heart sincere,
In virtue rigid, and in life austere;
Unskill'd to bend and meekly suffer wrong,
Warm in his friendship, in resentment strong,
He wish'd to see the parish stand in awe,
His precepts gospel, and his will the law:
If some poor hapless straggler left the track,
No kind entreaty woo'd the wanderer back;
Instead of modest Truth's persuasive charms,
Pride, Anger, Rage, were instantly in arms;
In short, it was this worthy Rector's fate
To spring to life at least an age too late.

Such was the man who felt well pleased and proud
To call Tom Weston from the vulgar crowd—
To nurse his talents, warm his youthful mind,
With brighter hopes, ideas more refined;
While to the Rectory Tom his steps would bend,
His fond heart whispering, he had found a friend!
'Tis thus, the florist finds some humble flower,
And bids it blossom near his favourite bower;
He loves the plant, because it gives him joy,
When selfish pleasures all his mind employ:
Such was the Rector's love, and such the village boy.

For three long years, each Sunday, foul or fair,
Tom ne'er was absent from the house of prayer—
Would sometimes, after sermon, stop to dine,
And list to hear the Rector's rhetoric shine.

Tom's active mind had now begun to soar,
Untrodden fields most anxious to explore:
Alas! a dangerous maze before him lay—
A flowery path, but wildly devious way!
From Gallia's land, a meteor, blazing far,
Was hail'd, as Freedom's bright and morning star;
And many a loyal British heart beat high,
To mark the splendour of that halcyon sky;

Unapprehensive of the giant form,
The dæmon hovering in the gathering storm;
Unseen the cloud, precursor of the flood,
Which soon descended in a shower of blood!

Tom Weston's unsuspicious heart was warm,
And Freedom sounded with seductive charm;
And while his breast with generous ardour glow'd,
He hail'd the goddess from her bright abode:
His friend, the Rector, with suspicious ear,
Heard every plaudit as it echoed near.
One day, some friends, for social converse met,
With Tom, were round the Rector's table set:
France soon became the burden of their song,
And, with the Rector, every change was wrong:
Discussion grew—and Tom, more warm than wise,
Accustom'd still to speak without disguise,
Took part with those who hail'd the rising sun,
And Gallia's day of happiness begun;
Unconscious still that he could give offence
By what appear'd to him plain, common sense.
Ah! heedless youth!—his mind a guileless page,
Though credulous, unskill'd in party rage!

Next week he went, with heart elate and gay,
To see the Rector in his usual way;
A menial servant, smiling, bade him wait;
The Rector 's call'd, and comes in haughty state;
For since the party from the Rectory pass'd,
His wrath, well nursed, had grown and gather'd fast;
All times unskill'd his passions to control,
Thus burst the tempest boiling in his soul:
"What brought you here? I hate your face to see!
You took a pride, Sir, in opposing me!
Seditious rascal!—ingrate!—there 's the door—
Begone!—and let me see your face no more!"

No doubt, the furious Rector's fiery zeal
Was fann'd by interest in his country's weal;
But, injudicious, fierce, and ill applied,
He cured no error, while he wounded pride;
For Tom, thus rudely from the Rectory driven,
Felt that an insult ne'er to be forgiven;
Rage fired his heart, while phrensy whirl'd his brain;
He sought a friend, and pour'd his mental pain.
"I'm nought surprised," this artful friend replies,
Insidious pleasure sparkling in his eyes:

"Why should you blush?—go triumph in the tale;
I'm glad to find you've seen within the veil—
Have seen exposed, in proper point of view,
The servile, sneaking, haughty, canting crew;
With cunning statesmen all in league combined
To fix their fetters on the free-born mind:
Too long we 've bow'd beneath their iron yoke;
But, thanks to France, the galling chains are broke;
And man shall flourish, happy, wise, and free,
When hypocrites and tyrants cease to be!"

Thus, while his philtres sooth'd the rankling wound,
The subtle poison ready entrance found;
Tom had not been of those who join the throng,
Indifferent if their faith be right or wrong;
He controversy, creeds, and systems read,
And to his Bible some attention paid;
Some gospel mysteries he could not conceive,
But hesitated still to disbelieve,—
When Reason's lamp could not a light supply,
He dared to doubt, but never to deny;
Free-will and Fate full many a thought had cost,
In Metaphysics' misty labyrinths lost.

Now, with resentment rankling in his mind,
His passions unsubdued, his friend unkind,
The Rector's faults were placed against his creed,
And Tom, a poor, unstable, shaken reed,
With pride the parson scorn'd—the church despised,
And other studies more important prized;
In devious wilds of sophistry he ran,
Till Mirabaud confirm'd what Hume began!

Ere Tom was wreck'd on Pyrrho's dismal shore,
Love taught his heart a more delightful lore.
Amelia Johnson, mild as summer morn,
And pure as dew-drop on the verdant thorn,
Of chaste simplicity the guileless child,
He saw and loved—and she approving smiled:
Of gentle manners, easy, ductile mind,
Her form was graceful, and her heart was kind;
To chase his griefs, and heal his wounded pride,
She blush'd consent—the nuptial knot was tied:
And now the Rector's insults all forgot,
Tom clasp'd his bride, and bless'd his happy lot.

There is a pause in every earthly joy,
And Love, the balm of life, is not the sole employ;

Some time they drank from his delicious springs,
Nor had a thought to spare on priests and kings;
But business, and the varied cares of life,
Led Tom to hear again of Gallia's strife;
Led him to mingle with a hot-brain'd train,
Devout admirers of Voltaire and Paine:
Tom's wit was keen, his arguments profound,
He saw his eloquence with success crown'd:
Priestcraft and monarchy were now decried,
And even a God, or doubted, or denied!
Amelia too, that meek and modest fair,
Her husband's joy, sole object of his care,
By Love's fond ties, and woman's weakness gain'd,
Renounced the faith she had through life maintain'd;
And she would talk of prejudice, how strong—
Perfectibility, a darling song—
The dawn of truth—the boundless powers of mind,
Omnipotent to renovate mankind!
Such this fair votary of the sceptic school,
The guileless maid, now turn'd a giddy, prattling fool.
Think not I seek to stain a brother's name,
While truth requires that I the Rector blame;

For Tom, who hated kings, and mock'd at Heaven,
Was from the fold by bigot fury driven;
While kind remonstrance, smiles, and accents mild,
Might to the path restored this erring child,
Retain'd a loyal subject to his King,
And choked the tares his rashness made to spring.

Amelia, now a tender mother seen,
Led her twin children o'er the village green;
A playful girl, and active, manly boy,
Their mother's pride—their father's hope and joy.
Alas! no joy had Thomas Weston now;
Deep clouds of care sat lowering on his brow!
By rigid Virtue scorn'd, by Prudence shunn'd,
Oppress'd by Poverty, by tradesmen dunn'd;
Now with himself and all the world at strife,
With not a hope beyond the present life,
He view'd the scene of more than midnight gloom,
Plunged in the dark abyss, and hurried to the tomb.

To pious minds there seems some pleasing grace
Still absent from a female sceptic's face;
Her cheek may glow, her sparkling eye may shine,
And round her ivory neck dark ringlets twine;

Light on her lip the smile of Love may play,
Still to the mind will restless Fancy stray,
And sigh, to find a dark and dreary void,
Life's noblest bliss unknown and unenjoy'd;
Hence absent all that Faith and Hope impart
To elevate the soul and warm the heart.

Yet was Amelia, in domestic life,
The tender mother and the faithful wife.
But when they brought her husband's breathless clay,
One glance she cast—then shriek'd, and swoon'd away.
Restored to life and intellectual pain,
With fever'd veins, delirium seized her brain;
Alternately she smiled, and sigh'd, and sung,
Tears on her cheeks, while phrensy ruled her tongue;
But while her speech in raving wildly ran,
She begg'd and pray'd to bring some holy man;
But not that priest, with proud heart, stern and cold,
Who rudely drove her Thomas from the fold;—
His presence would be hateful. I was next;
A peasant came in haste, with look perplex'd,
And cried, "Oh, Sir! if you have skill to save,
Tom Weston's widow's hastening to the grave!

Long shunn'd in life—seen with averted eye,
The hapless wretch is left alone to die!
Her conscience waken'd—Death approaches fast—
Good Sir, make haste, ere Mercy's hour be past!"
I went with speed—the shuddering victim lay,
While life's last foe, grim, hover'd o'er his prey;
Her lip was livid, and the fiend Despair
Sat in her eye, with wildly-frightful glare!
As I approach'd, she cast an anguish'd look,
While all her frame with strong emotion shook;
With keen convulsive grasp she seized my arm,
And cried, "Have you the power or skill to charm
These dæmon spectres, hovering o'er my bed?
Ah, no!—they wait till life's last spark is fled!
And then—Oh! speak—and say, what then remains?
Annihilation—or still future pains!
For, taught to doubt—to disbelieve—deny—
I fearless lived—but now—I dread to die!
All, all is dark, obscure; but if there be
A future state, what place remains for me?
My faith renounced—my children unbaptized—
Heaven's mercy scorn'd—Almighty power despised!

My babes will you from dark perdition save ?
Oh, say you'll guide their views beyond the grave !
Oh ! hear a wretch !—a sinner's parting breath—
Oh ! pray to shield me from this worse than death !"—
Ere I could raise my hands, the spark was gone—
The troubled spirit fled to worlds unknown.

I could not leave the helpless orphans there,
The home of sadness, sorrow, and despair ;
Beneath my roof the weeping pair were brought ;
They fondly look'd, and listen'd, as I taught ;
I saw, with joy, their ductile minds expand,
For Heaven had bless'd the labours of my hand.

When to the sacred font the twain were led,
Full many a tear was in the assembly shed ;
Not tears of grief, but tenderness and love,
While ardent prayers were pour'd to Heaven above.
They live—and still my friendly counsel seek ;
Their conduct blameless, as their minds are meek ;
I watch them with parental kind regard,
And in their filial fondness have my rich reward.

Register of Marriages.

FRANK DICKSON.

Although the dim and bounded view of man
The ways of Providence can seldom scan,
Its secret paths unable to descry,
Unskill'd to see the *wherefore* and the *why*;
Yet sometimes we can clearly trace below,
What pangs from guilt—what ills from folly flow;
And mark, in life, when comes, in sequent train,
A youth of pleasure, and an age of pain.

We saw Frank Dickson, in his early prime,
Most proudly start, to run a match with Time;
Saw him in Folly's paths unthinking tread;
Heap wrongs and woes on Widow Wilmot's head;
With joy unseemly, hail the welcome day,
When she before him cold and lifeless lay:
His future progress speaks in truth severe,
A moral lesson—if the world would hear!
When Death had snapt the matrimonial chain,
Frank gladly thought his youth renewed again;

Blest with his partner's better half—her wealth,
A frame robust, uninterrupted health,
To all the giddy joys of life alive,
He deem'd himself still young at fifty-five!
No child to plague, or claim a parent's care,
A boundless prospect lay before him fair;
And Frank resolved to riot unrestrain'd,
Till Pleasure's cup should to the dregs be drain'd:
"No more," he cried, "the slave of nuptial vows,
Nor e'er again cursed with a jealous spouse:
I, like the bee, will rove from flower to flower,
Amidst the varied sweets in Pleasure's bower;
My sun of life shall now unclouded shine,
While beauty's wanton lip is bathed in sparkling wine!"
He sees his hours in swift succession pass,
Wing'd with the venal kiss and jovial glass;
His health and wonted vigour now decay'd,
Till Art is called to languid Nature's aid;
Imagination fans his former flame;
Though changed the man, the heart is still the same.
"Shall I refuse," he cries, "the cup to taste,
Because I may the luscious potion waste?

I feel the fire of youth in every vein!
Why should I then the heart's warm wish restrain?
Mine be the joys that wine and women give!
But these denied—then let me cease to live!"
Thus wicks burn fastest when the oil is done,
And broader far appears the setting sun;
A gentle breeze will fan a smouldering fire,
While flickering flames by ruder gales expire.
Frank's fancy wander'd still in fairy bower,
And fondly hover'd o'er a wild wood flower,
That blush'd and blossom'd in the secret shade;
For Sally Richards seem'd a cottage maid.
The Muse might tell how graceful was her air,
Her smile how winning, and her face so fair:
I check my pen,—why should the fancy warm
To paint a venal syren's every charm?
For such was Sally—pupil from that school
Where Prudence sleeps, and Wisdom plays the fool!
She knew that Francis would no price deny,
To purchase charms and love that gold could buy.
Her plan was laid, her secret springe prepared,
And Sal, rejoicing, saw the bird ensnared.

But when she found how ardent was his flame,
She changed her purpose—play'd a deeper game—
To form a contract that should last for life;
Yes, she would be Frank Dickson's lawful wife!
And soon she felt she had her prey secure,
Her conquest certain, and her triumph sure.
I need not tell the meretricious art
That she employ'd, to lure a worthless heart:
Suffice to say, his blandishments were vain,
Each golden offer spurn'd with proud disdain;
While outraged Virtue, in her native grace,
Was counterfeited in her syren face.
At first, his passion was a sensual flame—
It now assumed a nobler, purer name;
For Sally's *virtues* with such lustre shone,
That he resolved to live for her alone!
To make such guileless innocence his wife,
And lead a long and spotless, happy life!
His purpose could no longer be delayed—
His heart and hand were offer'd to the maid;
While lawyers should in haste a deed prepare,
That she and her's alone his wealth might heir.

For Folly thus glass-beads and baubles shine
Bright as the diamond from the Eastern mine.
With sparkling eye, and softly-lisping tongue,
She bade him think how old, and she how young.
"I thank you, Sir—but this can never be:
"Farewell!" she said, "and think no more of me!"
I need not say how oft he went and came,
While she at every visit fann'd his flame;
At last, with due delay, to save her pride,
With well-feign'd modesty the fair complied.
When they before me to the altar came,
A strange sensation shot through all my frame;
I saw the blushing bride, with downcast eye;
Gazed on her blooming face, and heaved a sigh;
She seem'd a rose-bud, sweet as summer morn,
Bound to a hoary, leafless, blighted thorn;
I felt it grief, to think the garden's pride
Should be to loathsome, churchyard hemlock tied!
For as I mark'd her modest, dimpling smile,
I deem'd her artless bosom free from guile:
I thought what Frank was thirty years ago,
Thought of his aims, and Widow Wilmot's woe!

Then, Avarice could his sordid soul inspire;
Now, smoking ashes from a wasted fire,
Which neither light nor generous heat displayed,
The sensual purpose of his mind betrayed.
He from the altar led his blushing bride,
And blooming Twenty lay by wither'd Sixty's side!

Sally was skill'd to trifle, smile, and toy,
Knew all the arts of loose, voluptuous joy;
She simper'd, wheedled, and contrived to rule,
Her fondling grey-beard—vain, uxorious fool!
Some months had pass'd—her matron shape express'd
That Frank would be in all his wishes blest;
With gloating eye he gazed upon the fair,
Fond Fancy musing on his promised heir.
A phaëton's purchased—daily she must ride,
In safety seated by her husband's side.
Time roll'd along, and, ere the year was done,
His wither'd arms embraced an infant son.

As winter snows before the smiles of May,
So did the doting husband's strength decay;
Life's lagging tide crept slowly through his veins;
With rigid muscles, and rheumatic pains,

He limp'd along, with feeble, halting limb;
His speech was hollow, and his eyes grew dim.
Her purpose gain'd, and her's the sole command,
The reins were tighten'd in her skilful hand;
For she, in kindness, would assume the care
That weight of years forbade her lord to bear.
As slow, but surely, works the turning screw,
She smiled, and still his bands more tightly drew;
Till he at last, by struggling in his thrall,
Made every fetter still more keenly gall;
For she would walk, and ride, and gad about—
Had gossips in, and with her friends went out;
While he, with aching heart, and anguish'd mind,
Was to his couch with racking gout confined.
How writhed his frame! what rage his bosom swell'd!
When, from the window, he his wife beheld
Ride slowly o'er the lawn, in phaëton placed,
Her snow-white arm around the servant's waist!
And sometimes she would on his shoulder lean,
In summer twilight, on the terrace green,
And glance, and smile, with fondly wanton look,
Till Francis' soul with indignation shook!

Afraid to speak, unable to suppress
The wrongs he felt, with tender, kind address,
His timid counsel he contrived to frame,
As watchful only of her matron fame.
Around his neck she laid her arm so sleek,
Her slender fingers tapp'd his wrinkled cheek:
"This kiss, dear Frank! shall speak my love and truth!"
She press'd his wither'd lip—then turn'd, and wiped her mouth!

Threescore-and-ten found Francis tired of life,
While Sally bloom'd a buxom, wanton wife:
She saw with joy six children round her rise,
Hateful as serpents in her husband's eyes.
One day she placed the youngest on his knee,
And said, "Now, William, kiss papa for me!"
"And must I bear," he cried, "this scorn from you?
"Take your vile bantling from my blasted view!"
He said, and grinn'd, in ghastly horror grim,
While rage was quivering in his every limb.
"Be calm, my love—I'm sure you know full well—"
She said, and whisper'd—what I must not tell!
Contempt and scorn his pride could ill sustain;
With boiling blood, and looks of proud disdain,

He raised his arm—"Nay, this," she cried, "is worse—
The child to lift its hand against its gentle nurse!
Be quiet, deary—let your passion cool;
I'm loth to quarrel with a dotard fool!"

Accumulating ills, with age combined,
Now shed thick clouds and darkness o'er his mind;
Till from his memory would the present pass,
As glides the image o'er the polish'd glass:
The past—a chaos, jumbled in his brain,
Much perish'd, ne'er to be recall'd again!
By toys amused, he fretted, smiled, and sigh'd,
Or, drivelling, fondled, scolded, laugh'd, and cried;
While Sally, lost to every female grace,
Toy'd with her paramour before his face!
Would pat poor Francis, with sarcastic leer,
Then loudly bawling, stun his startled ear,
Till memory waking in his wither'd brain,
Renew'd his woes—told his disgrace again!
If in his sight the playful children came,
Their presence would his slumbering wrath inflame;
"Vile spawn—imps—filthy bastards!" he would cry,
And glare upon them with a tiger's eye;

Then stare around him—wring his hands, and weep,
Till wearied Nature lull'd each sense asleep!

'Twas thus, ten tedious, lingering years were pass'd,
His spouse afraid she ne'er would see the last;
Time on his wrinkled brow had writ *fourscore*,
And he was hastening to the long-wish'd shore:
When life's dim taper shed its parting beam,
Returning reason glanced with transient gleam;
He gazed around, and cried, "Departed shade!—
Ah! Emily Wilmot!—now thy wrongs are paid!"
In seeming sadness, Sal approach'd the bed,
To smooth the pillow for his weary head:
To shun her hated sight he vainly tried;
And shrinking from pollution's touch, he cried,
"Shame to thy sex!—detested—" all was o'er—
His pale lip quiver'd, and he breath'd no more!

Register of Burials.

EMMA STIRLING.

From dark oblivion's gulf their names to save,
Some climb the Alps, some stem the Arctic wave;

Lured by the noisy drum and trumpet's breath,
Some scatter desolation, fire, and death:
One on Parnassus proudly writes his name;
To brass and marble many trust for fame:
So weak, so vain, this boasted being Man,
His circle narrow, and his time a span!
Here, in his last retreat, rise sculptured stones,
'Midst fœtid weeds, rank grass, and mouldering bones;
But moss-clad stones will crumble while we gaze,
And polish'd brass with cankering rust decays;
Some nobler monument our names must save,
If we would wish them known beyond the grave.
Amidst the crowds that undistinguish'd lie,
Without a stone to draw the gazer's eye,
See where, in morning's dew, the daisy weeps,
And gems the turf where Emma Stirling sleeps!
On Sundays, passing to the house of prayer,
With slacken'd pace, the peasant pauses there;
With lighter steps the little children tread,
And strew their flowers above her grassy bed.
Long calm and pleasant, Emma's morn of life,
A thriving farmer's thrifty, cheerful wife:

A rash adventurer sought her husband's aid;
Though Prudence caution'd, Friendship was obey'd:
The schemer bankrupt—lost the farmer's wealth,
It sunk his spirits, undermined his health;
For small the wreck of fortune he could save,
And disappointment laid him in the grave!
A flood of sorrow mourning Emma shed;
But sighs and tears could not recall the dead;
And she, of fortune and her friend bereft,
Had now to scan the little Fate had left;
The best provision for her wants she made—
A small annuity, half-yearly paid;
And thus her grateful heart to Heaven resign'd,
Time's gentle hand restored the tranquil mind.
She had no child to claim a parent's care;
But she was bless'd in many an orphan's prayer;
Wide o'er the parish was her kindness felt,
Her counsels whisper'd, and her bounty dealt:
When age and sickness bowed the peasant's head,
And want the inmate of his cheerless shed,
Returning health oft smiled at her command,
While craving hunger bless'd her liberal hand:

The urchin shivering in the wintry storm
At Emma's door would show his naked form,
Assured that she the ways and means would find
To wrap his limbs from frost and biting wind;
From richer friends, wide o'er the parish spread,
She'd beg a blanket for the widow's bed;
A coat, to screen some orphan from the cold,
While she her tale with such persuasion told,
That Avarice, though reluctant to comply,
Durst not her prayer importunate deny.

When by her wealthy friends invited out
(For she had many, scatter'd round about),
Her work-bag still was dangling at her side,
And she her knitting-needles ceaseless plied;
Whoe'er the company, whate'er the sport,
Was to the thrifty widow still *n'importe*;
Her friends would chide, while she would thus reply,
"I've pass'd my promise, and the time draws nigh—
Hose for an orphan girl, and barefoot boy—
And shall I disappoint them of their joy?"

One day a distant friend a visit paid:
"You'll stop and dine?"—"Why, aunt, I'm much afraid

This unexpected call—but if you'll make
No change for me, with pleasure I'll partake."
"Dear John, of all that claims a wise man's care,
The most unworthy is a bill of fare:
I never of my board or larder boast,
But I can promise you both boil'd and roast."
The hour is come, the snow-white cloth is spread,
The dishes served, and grace devoutly said;
Removed the cover from a gay tureen,
Plain boil'd potatoes, rich and hot, are seen,
And these, *par excellence*, the centre graced;
Brown bread, and butter-milk, in flank were placed.
The stranger stared—"What means this fare, dear aunt?
Speak plain—does it proceed from choice or want?"
"Why should I blush to say, it springs from both?
I cut my coat according to my cloth;
A liberal hand has drain'd my pocket dry—
A month must pass ere I can have supply."
"You must not thus—I will your banker be!
Why should you blush to ask a loan from me?"
"What! run myself in debt?—that will I not!
'Twould break my peace, disturb my happy lot!"

Next week she in a pauper's hovel stood,
And found the inmates wanting fire and food:
Her purse was empty—something must be done!
A guinea borrow'd—on the waters sown,
Has warm'd the shivering, dried the weeping eye,
And to the hungry brought a rich supply!

Though some folks said that madness ruled her mind,
It has not proved of a contagious kind;
For, since she slept beneath that turf of green,
I have no symptoms of infection seen:
Romantic Charity is now no more,
And Wealth goes proudly past the poor man's door;
But tears of fond remembrance still are shed
Above the grassy turf that covers Emma's head!

CHARACTERS.

No. V.

As he who saunters o'er a rural scene,
Will find a spot arrayed in richest green,
Health on each breeze, and joy in every sound,
While Beauty blooms, and Plenty smiles around;
But passing forward, finds a sterile soil,
Ungrateful to the weary labourer's toil;
Where, parch'd by drought, or chill'd by soaking rain,
All seems unlovely on the arid plain;
A scanty crop repays the farmer's cares,
The shrivell'd grain commix'd with noisome tares;
Or, haply, he may see, in vernal morn,
Rich swelling buds the rose-tree's breast adorn;

When he returns, in summer's fervid hour,
To gaze, delighted, on the fragrant flower,
Rank weeds have choked, a worm has seal'd its doom,
And never shall the promised floweret bloom:
'Tis thus we meet in Life's uncertain way,
The clouds and sunshine of an April day!
A soil where thorns and noxious weeds abound,
Where fairest flowers and richest fruits are found:
And such the record that invites my pen
To sketch the varied scenes of life again.
I ne'er without a sigh beheld the tear
On Beauty's cheek, to Love and Pity dear!
Nor has the Muse e'er framed a fabled lay,
To show the world how woman goes astray;
I would not give a guileless bosom pain,
Nor on unspotted honour cast a stain.
Though Time has strew'd his wrinkles on my brow,
And rudely chill'd the heart's enraptured glow,
I once could love—still highly prize the fair;
A friendly monitor, I cry, "Beware!"
For them I write, for them record my tale,
As angels lovely, but as mortals frail!

Register of Baptisms.

KITTY CLARKE.

When Kitty Clarke was newly turn'd sixteen,
The village swains pronounced her Beauty's Queen!
Her air was graceful, and she dress'd with care;
Her voice was music, and her face was fair;
With glowing cheek, and brightly-sparkling eye,
Arch'd like the bow that spans the azure sky.
Such rural sweetness many a bosom fired,
Youth gazed and loved, while age her charms admired:
But some who mark'd her at the village dance,
Said there was something in her wanton glance,
A dimpling witchery in her amorous smile,
Which might her bosom of its peace beguile:
For at the wake she talk'd, and danced, and sung,
With giddy head, light heart, and heedless tongue;
Her laugh the loudest, longest on the green;
No look so loving, and no glance so keen;
Where young men met, the maiden loved to be,
Her bosom heaving still with lightsome glee;

For thoughtless Kitty saw no danger there,
And Fate, not Prudence, saved the reckless fair.
Each coming year some rising grace displayed,
In brighter beauty shone the rural maid:
When twenty years had roll'd around her head,
She bloom'd like rose-bud to the morning spread;
Not like the blossom in the noon-tide hour,
When sultry sun-beams scorch the languid flower;
Her's was the blush that meets the rising day,
When pearly dew-drops linger on the spray.
Four light-wing'd years had seen her in the crowd,
That fawn'd and flatter'd, smiled, and sigh'd, and bow'd:
So long the idol of the amorous train,
We wonder'd not that Kitty's heart was vain;
The marvel rather was, that gossip Fame
Had never dared to stain the maiden's name—
That she had shun'd each gay Lothario's net,
For Kitty was no scheming, cold coquette;
Her blush, her smile, that brighten'd every charm,
Her melting eye, declared her heart was warm.
We saw the giddy fair, day after day,
In danger's path unapprehensive stray!

Some said she owed her safety to her pride;
But let us think that Virtue was her guide;
Yet she would dress and frolic, flirt and sing,
Blithe as the bird that flirts on wanton wing;
No face so fair, no heart so gay was seen,
Amidst the throng that gambol'd on the green.
Yet could not all her charms, among the swains,
Lure one to sue for wedlock's sacred chains;
Enough for them to romp, or laugh, or talk,
Or lead the maiden in a twilight walk;
Her charms, though pleasing in the morn of life,
Were not the graces that adorn a wife.

Another year had scarcely glided by,
When Love, soft lurking in her brilliant eye,
His lightnings shot, as Kitty cross'd the plain,
And pierced the heart of John, a wealthy swain.
'Tis Nature's law, that hate engenders hate,
And love, by sympathy, will love create;
Thus she who long had sigh'd to be beloved,
Felt all his passion, and his suit approved;
With maiden modesty, and due delay,
She blush'd consent, and heard him name the day

Which should their steps to Hymen's temple guide,
And knit their hands—their hearts already tied.
Though John sat sovereign on her bosom's throne,
Although her fond heart loved but him alone,
That giddy heart, of admiration vain,
Its wonted weakness could not now restrain;
But, when the swains at evening heaved their sighs,
Express'd her pleasure with her tell-tale eyes,
And though at heart she scorn'd the rustic throng,
Would still with them the mirthful hours prolong.
Thus frolick'd gay, the giddy, thoughtless lass,
Until a "little month" had but to pass,
When she, in beauty's bloom and virgin charms,
Would hide her blushes in a bridegroom's arms.
The bride-clothes bought, the wedding-shoes bespoke,
Both parties seem'd impatient for the yoke;
When, fatal day! came round the annual fair,
And old and young, and all the world were there;
And Kitty, mingling in the mirthful throng,
Was on the tide of Folly borne along.
She look'd for John amidst the rural train,
But look'd and search'd, and wish'd and hoped in vain;

Yet he had promised there to meet the maid,
And her departure lingering Hope delayed
Till golden twilight glisten'd in the west,
And evening came, in dusky mantle drest.
The moon shines bright—the dance is now begun—
Temptation strong—too much for Kate to shun;
But light of heart, nor dreading danger nigh,
Again for John she look'd with anxious eye;
When, spent in vain the keenly-searching glance,
She careless mingled in the mazy dance,
And soon she found such pleasure on the spot,
That John and every care were all forgot;
Her glowing cheek suffused a richer dye,
And brighter fires were sparkling in her eye;
For Kate had wont to sport, smile, kiss, and toy,
With all her soul alive to mirth and joy,
Her wonted spirit why should she restrain?
An hour like this would ne'er return again;
In four short weeks, she must prepare through life
To sit at home—a dull, domestic wife:
Yet "wife," perhaps, had pleasure to impart,
Illumed her eye, played lightly round her heart;

Whate'er the cause, amidst the joyous fair
None danced so lightly, smiled so sweetly there.
Kate never wish'd to blossom in the shade,
And pining Envy long pursued the maid,
And now rejoiced, on Rumour's baleful wings,
In John's fond heart to fix her dæmon stings,
And whisper'd in his ear a venom'd tale,
Which thrill'd his heart, and made his cheek grow pale;
For Kitty, careless of her virgin fame,
Was falsely shown—a wanton, lost to shame!
The doting lover doubted, disbelieved;
Was she traduced?—or had she him deceived?—
"Shall I," he cried, "seduced by siren charms,
Unthinking take a wanton to my arms?
Disguised I'll meet her at the village fair,
Judge for myself, and mark her conduct there."
'Twas done—and John, in female garb arrayed,
With jealous eye watch'd o'er the giddy maid;
Saw her glide lightly in the sportive dance,
With youthful swains exchange the wanton glance;
Blush, whisper, yield her willing hand, and smile,
Her glowing cheek soft dimpling all the while;

Beheld her dewy lip by others press'd!
Rage, shame, and sorrow, rankling in his breast,
He left the sportive scene in wrathful mood,
At home on disappointed love to brood.
"False-hearted wanton!" he indignant cried,
"In all but form, my loved, affianced bride!
Perhaps my heart may yet the loss deplore;
But Honour, Prudence, says—we meet no more!"

She look'd for John with each departing day,
Till, sad and slow, a week had past away,
And still he came not—yet at home, and well!
Strange bodings rose—she must her doubts dispel!
Each Friday, business took the youth to town;
And Kate, in fine laced-cap and muslin gown,
Went there in haste, her recreant swain to meet,
And saw him soon, at distance, on the street.
Quick heaved her heart, while in her bosom strove
Contending passions—anger, pride, and love:
But she must chide, and her resentment show—
She bit her lips, to give them richer glow,
Call'd up Love's lightnings in her sparkling eye:
They met—he lowly bowed, and pass'd in silence by!

Insulted, scorn'd, the maiden home return'd,
Alternately her bosom chill'd and burn'd;
Mused on the cause could o'er his love prevail—
Some jealous whim, some idle, envious tale!
And lingering Hope still said, her youthful charms
Would lure the lover to her longing arms.
As twines the slender plant around the pole,
Still clinging closer as the loud winds roll,
But sickens daily in autumnal frost,
Till winter comes, and all its hold is lost,—
So Cath'rine's heart to hope still fondly clung,
Decaying daily, but still fluttering hung;
Till John another to Love's altar led!
Then Hope's last glimmering light in midnight darkness fled.
Thus hapless Catherine, with a guileless mind,
But thoughtless heart, to levity resign'd,
Victim of Folly, not the slave of Vice,
Of Guilt incurr'd the shame, and paid the price!
Despised and scorn'd, no more the maid was seen,
Light-hearted, sporting on the hamlet green;
No more she mingled in the rural dance;
Her eye no more displayed the wanton glance;

No more she smiled, the youthful swain to lure;
Her dress was modest, and her face demure;
Though Time was passing o'er the slighted maid,
Yet still she blossom'd in the secret shade;
As violets the noontide splendour shun,
And swains named Catherine now the beauteous Nun;
All ages mark'd the transformation strange,
And I beheld, and wonder'd at the change!
At twenty, she was laughter, love, and glee;
At thirty, a morose sour devotee;
With texts of Scripture ever on her tongue,
She teased the old, and sadly vex'd the young;
Her former levities with grief deplored,
And all the world's light vanities abhorr'd;
With long-drawn sighs, would mourn what she had been,
And closed by thanking Heaven she had her errors seen;
Remark'd the pride of dress, with bitter scorn,
Which forced her o'er a sinful land to mourn;
Of woman's frailty anxious still to hear,
To that she listen'd with attentive ear:
Whatever scandal, rumour, spread about,
Her anxious bosom search'd the secret out;

Then from her tongue the tale of slander flow'd,
From morn to night-fall it was blazed abroad:
"Think not," said she, "in ill that I rejoice;
But duty bids me lift my warning voice;
For women, now, alas! are lost to shame,
And men regardless of a virtuous fame!"
Thus Kitty would a carnal world lament,
On female frailty still most eloquent;
Her pious zeal by some most highly prized—
By others fear'd—by not a few despised.

The bloom of youth, though lingering late, had fled,
And forty years had roll'd o'er Catherine's head,
When sudden pain, one morn, her frame assail'd,
She writhed in agony, and loudly wail'd!
No doctor near, to minister relief,
To mitigate her pain, and sooth her grief;
Each heart was moved, tears stood in every eye—
When from the couch was heard an infant's cry!
The matrons started—stared—and look'd aghast,
As if a spectre had before them pass'd!
Soon from their loosen'd tongues light gossip fell,
And talk unseemly for the Muse to tell;

But Catherine, who oppress'd by sickness lay,
In anguish call'd, to take the wretch away—
'Twas death to look—its cries she could not bear—
The Enemy—the Evil One had placed it there!
To cast a stigma on her spotless fame,
And load a hapless maid with obloquy and shame.

Firm in hypocrisy and frenzied pride,
She Nature's common instinct now defied;
She spurn'd the infant from her iron breast,
Her chilling arms were ne'er around it press'd!
She was no mother, she in wrath declared;
Who was its father, she nor knew, nor cared!

At last, a beardless boy to me there came,
With downcast look, and cheek suffused with shame;
The lad confess'd his guilt—the matrons smiled,
And said that he had been seduced, beguiled.

But she who thus had cast a stumblingblock
Before the weak—given scoffers cause to mock,
Was now an object shunn'd, despised, and scorn'd,
Her life unhonour'd, and her death not mourn'd.

Register of Marriages.

SAMUEL ROWE.

Within my parish, twenty years ago,
No smarter youth was seen than Samuel Rowe.
The acting partner in a thriving trade,
His watchful eye each process still survey'd;
At morn, saw every workman at his post,
In summer's sultry heat, and winter's nipping frost;
And through the day, with unremitting care,
Whoever call'd, the master still was there;
At night, saw all in order due disposed—
The journal posted, and the ledger closed:
The ponderous gate harsh on its hinges turn'd,
He took the key, and to his home sojourn'd;
Where o'er his book, contemplative, he sat;
Or, with a friend, indulged in social chat,
Of trade to talk, if markets rose or fell,
And news that noisy Fame had got to tell;
Perhaps, descant on consuls, emperors, kings,
Trace public actions to their secret springs;

And then, to make the hour more lightly pass,
Eat bread and cheese, and sip a cheerful glass:
Thus, through the year his time to pass was seen,
In regular, though far from dull routine.

Anne Howard her descent could clearly trace,
The hapless offspring of an ancient race;
But chill Misfortune o'er her parents' head
Her bitter cup in large profusion shed;
And Anne, in flush of youth, and beauty's bloom,
Was forced to fill an upper servant's room.
The rose of health glow'd richly on her cheek,
Her mien was modest, and her temper meek;
Within her sphere so prudently she moved,
Her master prized her, and her mistress loved;
In graceful dress, yet modest, neat, and clean,
Twice every Sunday she at church was seen;
And I remark'd her in the house of prayer,
That each affection of the heart was there;
All earthly cares expell'd, the world cast out,
'Twas hers to worship with a heart devout.
Her song of praise—in prayer the secret tear,
All spoke the contrite heart, the soul sincere;

For piety was not her Sunday's dress,
And laid aside at night in weariness;
Deep on her mind the strong impression dwelt,
And more than Anne had e'er profess'd, she felt!

This gentle fair by Samuel oft was seen;
Her chaste demeanour, and her graceful mien,
To beauty join'd, the youth's attention drew,
Till from esteem a softer passion grew:
The tender tale was whisper'd in her ear,
And Anne, perhaps, was not displeased to hear;
For when she thought on woman's helpless state,
Poor—old—alone—it seem'd a piteous fate!
To wedlock, therefore, the "demurring maid"
Was half inclined—and yet to change, afraid;
For she no passion felt her heart impel,
No ardent flame, which reason could not quell:
So thought the maid; but she had thought so long,
The fire grew fiercer, and the flame more strong;
She sought her mistress—begg'd her to advise:
The lady read her wishes in her eyes;
And said, if happiness e'er dwelt below,
That Anna's chance was fair with Samuel Rowe.

Such thoughts were mine, when I the pair had tied,
And join'd the hands Death only could divide:
I deem'd I knew the prudent pair so well,
That happiness with them would deign to dwell.
'Tis thus presumptuous, rash, short-sighted man,
Would from the present hour, the future scan;
But often finds the heart a mere machine,
Where passions lurk, like secret springs unseen.

Led home, the bride beheld a mansion fair
For comfort form'd, herself sole mistress there:
Their honey-moon shed soft and gentle beams;
For they indulged in no romantic dreams.
How long Love's planet all unclouded shone,
May be conjectured, but was never known;
And friends, who first beheld it in the wane,
Deem'd it a mystery they could not explain.

In early life oppress'd with pinching care,
From stern necessity, Anne learn'd to spare;
What prudence urged, soon into habit grew,
And nameless were the saving schemes she knew.
With honest heart, but narrow, selfish mind,
She wish'd her husband to her side confined—

Thought he for her should every pleasure slight,
And nought but her afford an hour's delight—
The charms of Nature, and the garden's pride,
Unseen should smile when she was by his side—
Nor books, nor friends, his leisure hours should cheer,
No voice but hers be grateful to his ear—
In art, or nature, nought but love have charms,
Each hour an age, when absent from her arms.

Now Samuel had a keen, inquiring soul,
A mind that roved from Indus to the Pole,
And loved on history's varied page to pore,
On tales of other times, and songs of modern lore.
In vain he read of kingdoms lost and won,
Of polar frosts, or regions of the sun;
For Anne would fold her hands and heave a sigh,
Perhaps a tear-drop trembling in her eye,
Then say, "Oh! what, my dear, are these to me?
I care for nothing—but my child and thee!"
"Well, bring my fiddle, and I'll play a tune,
Or sing a song, blithe as a bird in June!"
"Oh no! my dear—your fiddle is profane!
Your songs, I grieve to say, are idle—vain!

If you will read, these histories forsake,
Unprofitable tales!— your Bible take—
The Song of Solomon—the book of Ruth—
Or where you will, for every page is truth!
Turn to the Psalms, when you're inclined to sing;
But touch no more that vain and sounding string!"

In condemnation all his books comprised—
His song prohibited, loathed and despised—
His favourite fiddle, too, forbid to touch—
Sam thought his Anne was "righteous over-much."

If he at night perchance brought up a friend,
In social talk a passing hour to spend,
She ne'er with smiles could such intruders meet,
Reflecting still that they must drink and eat;
Besides, it gall'd her narrow, selfish heart,
That ought but her a pleasure could impart.

At last, she boldly cried, "I beg, my dear,
You will not bring your gay companions here!
Why should our substance on the winds be sown?
We can be happy by ourselves alone."
Sam had an open heart, a social soul,
A spirit, too, that rose above control:

His friends were brought—but Anne had learn'd a trick,
And always when they came, was absent—sick!
Her chair stood empty at the supper board,
While indignation fired her angry lord,
And fairly snapt Love's finely mystic cord.

His parlour now had no domestic charms;
Anne grew less lovely to her husband's arms;
With friends he wish'd to meet, Sam learn'd to roam,
Went often out, and came much later home,
When curtain-lectures, of no gentle kind,
Inflamed the wounds Anne wanted skill to bind;
Till sullen looks, reproach, and cold disdain,
Next evening drove him, reckless, out again;
And thinking oft of frowns, and glances sour,
Procrastinated still the parting hour;
Laugh'd, sung, then stagger'd home—went drunk to bed;
Next morn rose late—went out, with aching head,
In eager haste to seek the drunkard's cure,
And morning drams made degradation sure!
Business neglected—matters soon went wrong;
His partner reason'd, counsel'd, threaten'd long;
At last, for safety, though it gave him pain,
Dissolved the contract, when all hope was vain.

An idler, reckless now, and lost to shame,
Sam seem'd in haste to blast his blighted fame;
With low-bred tipplers sat from morn till night,
And sometimes till the sun's returning light.
Love long had fled—but what he deem'd much worse,
Soon came the lightness of an empty purse;
Their costly furniture all seized and sold;
Involved in want, and miseries manifold!
Deep plunged in vice—the lowest of the low,
Along the street stalks drunken Samuel Rowe;
He swings a cudgel, bawls with frantic noise—
Of men the scorn—the sport of idle boys;
The wretched father of an infant race,
Rags on their back, and hunger in their face!
His cheerless home a mud-wall'd hut obscure;
And there Anne Howard toils, forlorn and poor;
No smile of love diffuses gladness there—
Sam swears, or sleeps—Anne sits absorb'd in care.
I never doubted of her heart sincere;
And yet, to me, this truth has long been clear—
If she had knowledge with her zeal combined,
As wife and woman, complaisant and kind,

Her husband had not sunk in vice so low,
Nor she been plunged in want, in wretchedness, and wo.

Register of Burials.

EDMUND GRAY.

Leave these vain monuments of vulgar pride,
And read that rudely sculptured stone beside;
In simple rhymes, you'll find the humble name
Of one whose memory lives in village fame;
And I, with pleasure, frame my rustic lay,
A tribute justly due to Edmund Gray.

Seven years of infancy had circled by,
Health tinged his cheek, and joy illumed his eye,
When fell Disease her baleful influence shed,
And light from Edmund's eyes for ever fled;
Variola then triumph'd on her throne,
Jenner and Vaccination both unknown.
Some time in sad despondency he wept,
Then round the walls with timid caution crept;
Next, bolder, ventured to the village green,
And cheerful, mingled in the mirthful scene;

Heard all the gossip of Dame Nixon's school,
Talk'd of the trouts that wanton'd in the pool,
Inquired about the magpie's annual nest,
And vernal flowers, that erst his eyesight bless'd.

Young cousin Mary had his playmate been;
Now, on her arm the boy would fondly lean,
With her, delighted, to the meadow stray,
And o'er the daisied turf light bounding play;
Would of its buds the fragrant green birch strip,
And press the primrose to his raptured lip;
Bask in the vernal sun's enlivening beam,
And fondly listen to the purling stream;
List to the warblings of the woodland throng,
Or, sweeter still, the sky-lark's cheerful song;
Then he would smile, and strain his little throat,
To imitate the cuckoo's changeless note.

Strange though it seem, his time flew quickly past,
The present hour still happier than the last;
For Providence was in its chastenings kind,
And gave the cheerful heart, the fruitful mind;
One sense withdrawn, the rest more perfect grew,
And he from each, rich varying pleasure drew:

His sense of touch so delicately fine,
No lady's fingers half so feminine;
When sporting playmates studied to beguile,
With careful groping and good-natured smile,
He then would say, "You have forgot, my friend,
I have an eye at every finger-end!"
Smit with the harmony of soothing sound,
He sat, his soul absorb'd in bliss profound;
Whene'er he softly touch'd his violin,
It proved an antidote to care and spleen;
There seem'd a spirit in the trembling strings,
That reach'd the heart, and touch'd its secret springs;
Not old Timotheus, with his magic hand,
E'er held the passions more at his command!
The violin gave pleasure to his ear;
But there was music to his heart more dear;
The gentle tones of Mary's melting voice
Thrill'd through his heart, and made his soul rejoice.
Yet her's was not the polish'd grace of art,—
Her notes were Nature, and they reach'd the heart!
And she would oft her cousin's footsteps guide,
Where summer scatter'd sweets on every side;

Lead him along the heath, or down the vale,
When health and fragrance breathed in every gale;
With tender talk his darkling hours beguile,
Her kindness felt, and own'd with artless smile.

But years on years had lightly pass'd away,
And manhood mark'd the form of Edmund Gray;
While bashful Mary, in her virgin pride,
Blush'd to be seen by cousin Edmund's side;
No longer he must on the maiden lean,
And she no more must guide him o'er the green;
And now he feels, though by his mother led,
The sweetest bliss his bosom knew had fled;
But oft, alone, he sought the shady thorn,
Where he with Mary hail'd the breeze of morn;
Soft from his flute, breathed o'er the airs she sung,
Till rocks and woodland echoes round him rung;
And then, to sooth his lonely, aching breast,
In plaintive tone his sorrows thus express'd.

"Why, lovely Mary, from me fly?
Thou light of life, to me so dear!
Why leave me thus alone to sigh,
Where all around is darkness drear?

"Although my mother's heart is warm,
Her hand in kindness clasping mine,
It cannot give that nameless charm
My bosom felt when press'd by thine!

"I cannot see thy beauties glow,
Nor mark the lustre of thine eye;
But I have felt sweet fragrance flow,
When thou hast heaved the tender sigh.

"Thy breath could richer balm impart
Than sweetest flowers, in glea or grove;
Thy sigh shot rapture through my heart—
Methought it was the sigh of love!

"I know thy gentle heart is kind,
And Fancy tells me thou art fair;

Thy faultless form fills all my mind,
Thy image dwells for ever there!

"By day, it gives my soul delight,
And comes at night, in dreams to cheer;
With Mary, all were sunshine bright—
Without her, all is darkness drear!"

Such was the love-sick Edmund's simple strain:
Though pour'd alone, it was not breathed in vain;
For Mary hearing, listen'd, pitied, sigh'd,
And struggling long with love and virgin pride,
Though keen the conflict, pleasing was the strife;
And Edmund Gray, though blind, was blest for life!

With clean, well-furnish'd shop, and constant trade,
With ready hand, he reckon'd, measured, weigh'd;
No darkness dimm'd his calm domestic sky,
For love still glisten'd in his Mary's eye;
To church, each Sunday, Edmund kindly led,
The Psalms and Service all from memory read;
In Prayers, Responses, still he bore his part,
With Christian piety and humble heart.

With Fortune smiling, and a loving wife,
Blind Edmund lived a cheerful, happy life:
For what was lost he ne'er complain'd of Heaven;
But, ever grateful for the mercies given,
With faith and hope, look'd to a scene more bright,
Where all is perfect in celestial light.
His call was sudden—unperceived the blow,
That wing'd his spirit from this world below.
Beside that stone, amidst his kindred clay,
There sleeps the mortal part of Edmund Gray.

CHARACTERS.

No. VI.

Still must my pen a bootless warfare wage
With follies register'd on every page;
This faithful record, I lament to find,
Still tells of fools of heterogeneous kind:
As in the gaudy tulip's flaunting race
We endless shades and variations trace,
Some form'd by Art, and some by Nature's hand,
Unknown the species, till the flower expand;
The glowing bauble then receives a name,
But still the genus is in all the same;
As countless the vagaries of the mind,
The endless aberrations of mankind;—

Some term them frailties—call them what you will,
Reflection tells us they are follies still!
Of such, with pensive heart, again I sing,
Though rough the verse, and harsh the sounding string.

Register of Baptisms.

MARIA GAY.

Maria—Laura—Angelina Gay,
How shall I frame to thee the liquid lay?
Or how, in melancholy notes, rehearse
Thy loves and sorrows, in melodious verse?
It may not be—in vain the task I try;
No muse, responsive, echoes back my sigh;
And vainly sacrificing sense for sound,
Is but to be in gilded fetters bound:
I therefore cast my leading-strings aside,
Content to strut in homely, rustic pride:
This lady's long, mellifluent, sounding name,
Enough to waft a Spanish Don to fame,
Must be curtail'd—harmonious though it be,
And plain Maria must suffice for me.

Perhaps for her it had been better too!—
Truce with reflection—I my tale pursue.
Maria's mother in high life was bred,
For she each morn dress'd Angelina's head—
The youngest daughter of a noble sire,
London his home, his lands in Lincolnshire.
This Angelina, beautiful and vain,
Had still admirers dangling in her train;
To draw attention was her sole delight,
Her daily study, and her dream by night.
Her maid was skill'd in all the arts of dress,
To make the most of Nature's loveliness;
Could rouge or carmine dexterously prepare,
The bosom decorate, and braid the hair;
Besides, she flatter'd with such fluent art,
As fix'd her favour in her mistress' heart.
But Love this cunning handmaid's heart beguiled;
For Dick, the coachman, flatter'd, sued, and smiled;
She kindly listen'd—found resistance vain—
Her heart was tender, and she bless'd the swain;
And Richard Gay, their fortunes to begin,
Made her the mistress of the White Horse Inn.

Before the honey-moon had lost its charms,
An infant daughter bless'd the husband's arms;
And now the name should Angelina be—
But she, though loved, the youngest was of three;
And hence, the child, all due respect to pay,
Was named Maria—Laura—Angelina Gay.

It boots not here, to waste the reader's time,
To tell an infant's charms in jingling rhyme:
The nameless graces that the child endears,
And renders lovely in its early years,
Each mother feels, each father's fond heart knows
And all the parent in his bosom glows;
While clambering on his knees with playful wile,
The winning look, and soft endearing smile,
The lisper's prattle, and the glancing eye,
The simple question, or the prompt reply—
Oh! these to love primeval bliss impart,
And shed new raptures round a parent's heart
Till, daily gazing on these artless charms,
A doting fondness all the bosom warms;
Each passion prompted, and each humour nursed—
The child is in the parents' kindness cursed.

And such, alas! Maria's early morn,
Soft on the sun-bright tide of pleasure borne;
No passion check'd, no pert demand denied—
Each folly cherish'd, and each wish supplied;
Her doll in silks and lace superbly fine,
Her paroquet in gilded cage must shine;
The nursery hung with splendid drapery round,
Her fairy-tales in red morocco bound—
Her dress so rich, so gaudy, and so clean,
Maria look'd and moved a fairy queen.

Meanwhile, the White Horse Inn, with growing fame,
O'er all the country round had gain'd a name;
For carriers, coachmen, grooms, Dick drew good beer—
His kitchen, too, could still supply good cheer;
And then, his cellars held such racy wine,
That country squires would sometimes meet to dine.
For ever busy, bustling day and night—
The landlord civil, and his wife polite;
The hostler careful, fresh his corn and hay;
A bar-maid blushing like a morn in May;
Time lightly trode, and still their business grew—
Old friends were steady—fame still brought them new.

Thus on their heads auspicious Fortune smiled,
And still Maria was their only child;
And she in beauty's loveliness was seen,
With angel sweetness, and just turn'd sixteen;
Of slender form, and delicate in health—
Their pride—their all—and heiress of their wealth!
Why should the tender fair be taught to toil,
Bronze her complexion, and her fingers spoil?
Besides, she had a sentimental mind,
A heart susceptible, and taste refined;
And it was proper she should keep afar
From vulgar noise and bustle at the bar;
For sensibility to her was dear,
And rustic laughter painful to her ear;
Hence, in a room apart, she sat retired,
While tales of tenderness her soul inspired;
The mawkish novel, and the morbid tale,
Were sure to wake the sentimental wail;
"First Love,"—"The Secret Sigh,"—"The Broken Heart,"—
And "Delicate Distress," could bliss impart:
O'er "Werter's Sorrows" she would sit and weep;
With "Female Frailties" cry herself asleep;

And she had, weekly, from the teeming press,
Romantic nonsense—fanciful distress.
And then the Muse was ready with relief,
In plaintive strains to sing "the joy of grief:"
A votary of the Della Crusca school,
Whate'er her heart, her head was never cool;
A cheese-mite shaken from its rich domain
Would heave her bosom with extatic pain:
A solar microscope to her display'd
Those forms unseen that boundless space pervade;
Her heart grew sick—her eyes were full—she sigh'd—
"Poor animalculæ!—ah, hapless race!" she cried;
Then quick retired, her sorrows to rehearse,
And mourn'd their fate in most melodious verse.

John Hopkins, tenant of a neighbouring farm,
Was young, well made, in worldly wealth was warm;
And thought that it might add a bliss to life,
Could he obtain a fair and faithful wife;
And Love, who will fantastic antics play,
Fix'd his affections on Maria Gay:
His love was told in language blunt and plain,—
Maria's smile with hope dismiss'd the swain.

Meanwhile, she mused on all his youthful charms,
His manly air, and two rich cultured farms;
But then, his name—so vulgar in the sound—
Its very echo gave her heart a wound!
Still more—if e'er her heart to love inclined,
It must be one of a congenial mind;
That John's was such, there was much room for doubt,
But she would search each mental feeling out.

One morn, a fly was in her cream-pot drown'd;
The maiden's heart was plunged in grief profound!
She sadly sigh'd—perhaps some tears were shed—
Her fix'd eye gazing on the hapless dead;
And as she ne'er invoked the Muse in vain,
She now sat down to weave the funeral strain.
A long and labour'd elegiac lay
Had crown'd her labours ere the close of day!
The sable-border'd sheet was hardly dry,
When John came in; and, now his taste to try,
Maria read, as from a female friend,
The plaintive ditty, by her fingers penn'd,
In tragic style, and pathos most sincere—
Oft heaved a sigh—and scarce restrain'd the tear.

John stared—but soon his sides with laughter shook;
Maria paused, with proud indignant look:
Said he, "You mimic well, upon my word—
Bombastic nonsense!—trifling most absurd!
But you burlesque it in such solemn strain—
Read on, I pray, and let me laugh again!"
This closed their loves—they parted in chagrin;
Though both were glad they had each other seen.

A martial corps was quarter'd in the town;
From whence the officers would gallop down,
Breathe country air, then at the White Horse dine,
And spend the evening o'er inspiring wine;
Or, as all heroes are still frank and free,
Would join the ladies o'er a dish of tea;
Where Captain Woodville—Lovelace of the day—
Paid prompt attention to Maria Gay;
Responsive echoed all she said or sung,
With tender glance, and eloquence of tongue,
Approved her taste, her sentiments admired,
And soon Maria's high respect acquired;
Till at his ease, and quite familiar grown,
He to the White Horse often came alone,

To hold communion with a kindred mind,
A peerless gem, in richest casket shrined;
For dear to him the sentimental sigh;
The tear of sympathy in beauty's eye
Far brighter shone, shed lustre more divine,
Than richest diamonds from Golconda's mine.
So Captain Woodville to Maria said,
And tears of rapture o'er her verses shed.
A mind so pure Maria ne'er had met—
And tête-a-tête with him enraptured set,
O'er tales of fiction heaved commingling sighs,
With tears of pity trembling in their eyes.
Platonic love no sensual dross defiles—
Ethereal transports, and seraphic smiles!
No low desire the spring of mind controls,
Or checks the raptures of congenial souls!
So thought and felt the fond impassion'd pair—
No warning voice at hand to cry "Beware!"
Until by dire Experience doom'd to find
That soul and sense below are still combined.
Maria weeps—but not o'er fancied wo;
Her bitter tears from heartfelt sorrows flow.

No art can hide, nor time wipe out her stain—
And where is Captain Woodville?—Gone to Spain!
The blushing mother of a bastard boy—
No husband came to smile, and wish her joy;
Her mournful lullaby Maria sings,
While vulgar scorn her anguish'd bosom wrings!
When to the sacred font her father came,
And stood before me with this child of shame,
Methought his troubled spirit felt rebuke,
And read reproaches in his pastor's look;
For he was careless, and his child unwise.
Ye sentimental fair, do not my tale despise!

Register of Marriages.

JOHN MARLOWE.

And now the nuptial page invites my eye,
I shall not here again have cause to sigh.
Alas! it tells of one of restless mind,
Unfix'd, unstable as the wintry wind;
With Fate and Prudence at perpetual strife—
A giddy, whirling weathercock through life.

John Marlowe's father was a thrifty man,
Who always acted on the saving plan;
From youth to age this proverb trite maintain'd,
"A penny saved, is still a penny gain'd;"
Who lived a life of penury and care,
To scrape a fortune for a thankless heir.
I'm wrong—for when the miser breathed his last,
A glance of gratitude the young man cast;
With sparkling eyes, and out-spread hands upraised,
"He's now at rest!" said John, and "Heaven be praised!"

Five years had John his father's shop-boy been;
Now his the whole—and he not yet eighteen:
The shop was in a well-frequented street,
And John had been to customers discreet;
Hence, he presumed, a fortune might be made,
By persevering in his father's trade:
The present stock, to Fashion's eyes quite stale,
Must find a market in a public sale;
And drugget, duffle, shag, shalloon, and stuff,
All meet the "going—gone!" of Mister Puff.
The shop must be repair'd, new painted all—
The door's disgraceful—windows far too small:

And ere his father's turf was clothed in green,
What vast improvements on the place were seen!
In gilded chains a crystal lustre hung,
A fine glass door on patent hinges swung;
The roof on fluted columns seem'd to lean;
An arch, like Iris, proudly ran between,
On which we read, most dazzling to behold,
"John Marlowe, Mercer," gay in blue and gold;
Two broad bow-windows to the sight display'd
Attractive samples of the stock in trade;
From London, Norwich, North, South, East, and West,
Whate'er the fashion-mongers term'd the best,
Was promptly order'd, and procured in haste,
The richest patterns, and the newest taste:
Above the door a female figure shone,
With flowing drapery, and a sparkling zone,
Which on a gilded anchor seem'd to lean—
Some said it was a strange, outlandish queen;
And others thought that John had placed it there
To show how he admired and loved the fair;
When, tired with gazing on the gaudy show,
"Taste, Fashion, Fancy," caught their eyes below.

With gentle friction as brown amber draws
To closer contact feathers, rags, and straws—
As airy webs entrap the silly fly—
So novelty attracts the gazer's eye;
And now, the Mercer saw, with keen delight,
His shop with ladies throng'd from morn to night:
The wither'd spinster in brocade and lace,
Those vain allurements for a wrinkled face,—
In new-gilt frames, thus faded portraits stare,
When cankering Time has laid the canvass bare;
The matron, stately as the full-blown flower,
Its bosom spread to hail the noontide hour;
The bashful virgin, blushing to the view,
Like half-blown rosebud, in the morning dew—
Before the youth so rich a banquet spread,
No wonder witching woman turn'd his head;
For though his heart had never heaved a sigh,
Yet Fancy could the place of Love supply;
And such his volatile, unstable mind,
Still to the newest was his heart resign'd.
Surrounded now with beauty, fair and young,
The speaking eye, soft smile, and fluent tongue,

The glowing blush, that gave a nameless charm,
The swelling bosom and the polish'd arm,—
On these would John in youthful fondness gaze,
While round his heart play'd Fancy's flickering blaze;
A transient spark of cold, phosphoric light,
The fleeting ignis-fatuus of the night;
No lasting flame—no pure ethereal fire—
An exhalation from the putrid mire;
Though restless still, it vainly seems to rise,
Now here, now there—then, lost in darkness, dies!

Miss Bloomfield's cheek first caught the Mercer's eye,
And cost him many a secret, pleasing sigh;
Six months and more a fondly amorous fool,
The fire he felt he thought would never cool;
And she took care with smiles to feed the flame,
For almost daily to the shop she came;
And she would cheaply purchase silks and lace,
With glowing blushes on her downcast face;
But ladies who delight in love, we find
Will sometimes, heedless, leave their wits behind:
One day, Miss Bloomfield led her cousin there,
The sweet Miss Mandeville, young, tall, and fair;

Her locks play'd round a slender neck so white,
John's heart was ravish'd with a new delight;
Fate and the stars were partners in the plot,
And in a week Miss Bloomfield was forgot.
Miss Mandeville an invalid had been,
And sought sea-bathing and a change of scene;
Her languid look, so delicately fine,
John thought her more than mortal—half divine!
Gloves, ribands, oft were barter'd for a smile,
A melting glance, from Fanny Mandeville!
His passion grew—and blest he might have been,
Had he Miss Mary Sparkle never seen;
But out at tea, the lightnings of her eye,
Keen as the fiery shaft shot from the sky,
Pass'd through his head—John thought it was his heart;
But that was not the vulnerable part!
A lingering pain Love doom'd him to endure;
But time works wonders—and perform'd a cure.
Miss Rigadoon led up a country dance;
Her graceful motion fix'd our hero's glance;
Light as a sylph he saw her bound along,
Glide o'er the floor, and thread the mazy throng,

And Love's attractions John transported feels,
Proceed not from the fairest face, but lightest heels:
His passion, like the moon, must wax and wane,
And, like that planet, change, to change again.

A lay of love so sweet Miss Tweedle sung,
So soft the trembling wires symphonious rung,
So lightly o'er the keys her fingers flew,
And mock'd the ivory with their fairer hue,
He listen'd—gazed, with ravish'd eyes and ears,
As Hebe struck the music of the spheres;
And had she never ceased her tuneful skill,
Perhaps the Mercer might have loved her still.

Miss Blandford shone in native eloquence,
As Venus lovely, with Minerva's sense;
Each sentence charged with wisdom most profound,
And rhetoric's harmony in every sound!
John listen'd long—at last, he saw, with pain,
That knowledge made the lady pert and vain.

He left the fair, of eloquence afraid;
But Violetta was a modest maid;
With downcast eyes, her accents mild and meek,
A bashful blush still glowing on her cheek.

Insipid charms no lasting love inspire;
For lack of fuel, dies the languid fire.

Miss Woodbine's manners were devoid of guile;
And she could prattle, dance, blush, sing, and smile;
Her heart and soul were still intent to please,
With frank, good-natured, unaffected ease;
But proved so loving, and so fondly kind,
Fears for his honour fill'd the mercer's mind!

Jane Lettuce was a fair, but prudent maid,
Dress'd with decorum, in her manners staid:
These are the graces that adorn a wife,
And John expected to be bless'd for life;
But tête-a-tête when seated with the prude,
He seiz'd her hand—she frown'd, and call'd him rude;
Her glowing cheek he struggled to salute—
Enraged, she cried, "Stand off!—licentious brute!"

Though woman still was to our hero dear,
Now, sage Experience whisper'd in his ear
"What's Beauty?—Gewgaw of the passing hour!
Coquettes too wanton—prudes of temper sour,
And female wisdom still will strive for power!
'Tis wealth alone can lasting bliss impart,
Gold has unfading charms that fix the heart."

He heard, approved, and eager in the chace,
Soon started game—though distanced in the race;
For he had loved so long, so oft, that fame
Had taken freedoms with his hapless name,
As weathercock, or fortune-hunter known,
Each fair beheld him with a heart of stone.

His five-and-thirtieth year now pass'd away,
John felt the business of his shop decay—
Supplies were wanting—something must be done!
Time press'd—and Widow Wilkins' heart was won.
Large was the widow's stock of years and health,
To which report had added worldly wealth:
That Gaffer Wilkins left much wealth, was true;
But he behind him left three daughters too!
He had been dead some sixteen years, or more,
And Time had made sad inroads on the store;
Even poverty approach'd, with rapid stride,
Though she had managed still that truth to hide.

When they before me to the altar came,
She tried to blush—to show she felt Love's flame:
It would not do—that cheek refused to glow,
Where Time had scatter'd wrinkles years ago;

Whene'er she spoke, a vacant space was seen,
Where ivory teeth in days of yore had been;
And straggling hairs stood bristling on her chin,
In colour darker than her sallow skin.
They left the temple in a chaise and pair,
While rattling wheels made all the village stare.
Short was their honeymoon of soft delight,
For both soon found it was a mutual bite;
John hoped the widow's cash his bills would pay,
And she had match'd, to scare grim want away.
With duns and angry creditors beset,
John saw his name enroll'd in the Gazette;
Ashamed, deserted, and quite tired of town,
Through miry roads, the pair on foot came down,
And in our village fix'd their place of rest,
Where both agreed of bad to make the best.
Their shop—oh! how unlike to that, where shone
The gilded lady with the glittering zone!
One little window, fill'd with tapes and toys,
Comfits, and gingerbread for girls and boys.
If not fastidious, we may enter there,
And look around us on their motley ware:

A deal-board counter stands behind the door;
But tread with caution on the crowded floor,—
There bottles, boxes, and dried fish you'll find,
With cheese, and crockery-ware of coarsest kind.
Have you enough? or shall we forward pass,
And closer view the heterogeneous mass?
Tobacco, snuff, soap, treacle, herrings, eggs,
While tallow candles hang on wooden pegs;
There rancid butter—rotten apples here,
With thimbles, needles, pins, and nameless gear.
We've had sufficient for our every sense,
These mingled odours soon would give offence!
Yet, though in haste, impatient to be gone,
A moment pause, and cast a glance at John:
Behind the counter, gaunt and grim, he stands,
A rusty snuffbox fills his dirty hands;
His long, lean fingers have his face embrown'd,
And toss'd the titillating dust around;
His thread-bare coat all stain'd, at elbows torn;
With hair uncomb'd, and bushy beard unshorn.
See Mrs Marlowe, cowering o'er the fire:
Pale is her face, and ragged her attire;

The scalding stream flows from her haggard eyes;
Her croaking voice is harsh, discordant cries;
Her cap unchanged, the same by night and day,
Hides not her matted locks of grissly grey;
A ragged 'kerchief round her scraggy neck,
Displays the slattern, lost to self-respect;
Half bare her bosom, and her stays unlaced,
The gown hangs loosely on her long, lank waist;
A black tobacco-pipe, two inches long,
Between her skinny lips is smoking strong;
With aspect melancholy and forlorn,
Her looks at John imply reproach and scorn;
Slip-shod she shuffles o'er the clay-cold floor,
With wasted form, and wither'd at the core!
Her shivering husband, yawning, looks askance,
And eyes his helpmate with contemptuous glance;
Curses his folly, and his wayward fate,
And mourns his errors, when, alas! too late.

Register of Burials.

WIDOW WELSTED.

That there are follies in life's every stage—
That wisdom does not always dwell with age,
If proof were wanting, 'tis recorded here,
I grieve to say, unblotted with a tear.*
James Welsted had a fair and prudent wife;
But dying, left her, in the noon of life,
The widow'd mother of an infant boy,
Now all her care, her hope, and only joy.
As fortune had on their short union smiled,
Five hundred pounds was left this orphan child;
Herself sole guardian, by the father's will;
And long did she the sacred trust fulfil.
She kept a tavern, had a thriving trade,
Nor had the bloom of youth begun to fade:

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* "The Recording Angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a *tear* upon the word, and blotted it out for ever."—*Sterne.*

The handsome widow was by numbers wooed,
By giddy youth, and grim old age pursued;
Though she could love, her heart was not in haste;
And ten long years "she lived a widow chaste,"
Her cheek still glowing like the morning sky,
The fire of love still glistening in her eye,
When David Morton tried to gain her heart,
By smooth-tongued talking and insidious art;
For, though the lovely widow pleased his eyes,
He deem'd her wealth by far a nobler prize.

Now David was in worldly wisdom sage,
A prudent man—her match in rank and age;
Long time she ponder'd, like a bashful maid,
Whose heart is half inclined, but still afraid,—
Afraid that she might do her child some wrong,
For still maternal love was warm and strong;
And as she mused, thus to herself she said—
"Though often wooed, and willing to be wed,
For ten long years I've led a single life,
While love and duty sometimes were at strife:
My son, thank Heaven! is now a child no more,
And Love for me may still have bliss in store:

To headstrong youth my heart I would not yield;
But years would prove a buckler and a shield;
And may not I in David Morton find
Experience sage, with youth's fond love combined?"
When Love and Prudence parley, one may guess
Whose potent arguments will strongest press:
The widow's heart was given to have and hold,
But Morton's mercenary soul was cold;
Her heart sincerely true, and warmly kind,—
His the smooth, guileful tongue, and sordid mind;
In trade, a scheming, speculating man,
Pursuing still some visionary plan;
But cash was wanting—now the widow won,
That snug *five hundred* for her darling son
Would suit his purpose, answer all demands,
And gain a thousand in his thrifty hands.
Such was his talk, with blandishments of speech,
When David tried the golden prize to reach;
But though a wife, she was a mother still,
And hence declined compliance with his will;
She said, his specious plans might all be cross'd,
And they would mourn her William's fortune lost.

When he in vain had flatter'd, smiled, caress'd,
In harsher tones he still his purpose press'd;
The clouded brow, cold words, and lowering eye,
O'ershading deep and dark Love's halcyon sky.
"Though I have been," she said, "deceived, beguiled,
My mind's resolved—I will not wrong my child."

Love's glimmering taper soon was quench'd in night;
The son grew hateful in the husband's sight;
Though William was a cheerful, lively boy,
Yet David nipt his every bud of joy;
Took him from school, his growing spirit broke,
And bent his neck beneath an iron yoke.
Some quarrel rose, the husband stamp'd and swore,
And in his rage fell'd William to the floor;
Unsated wrath urged him to strike again—
From William's head the blood now flow'd amain;
The anguish'd mother sicken'd, went to bed—
And ere she rose, her darling son had fled!
To Shields, with hasty steps, his course he bent,
And there on board a new-rigg'd collier went.

Love banish'd, and domestic peace destroy'd,
Now Mrs Morton's heart became a void—

No; not a void, for grief and pining care,
With keen remorse, had made their lodging there!
Hysteria follow'd, with her countless train,
That rack the body, and disturb the brain;
And cordial drams applied, these ills to cure,
Confirm'd their strength, and made their progress sure:
Yet still she felt a transient gleam of joy,
When fond hope whisper'd she should see her boy;
But when three long and lingering years had pass'd,
A gale swept William from the rocking mast,
And plunged him deep beneath the mountain wave,
His shroud the sea-weed in a watery grave!

Fate, when she dealt this unexpected blow,
Loosed the last tie that bound her heart below;
While David felt his dearest wish was won,
For Mrs Morton now could heir her son.
Dead to the charms of wealth, and every joy,
The wretched mother mourn'd her sailor boy;
Found comfort in a dram—then wept again—
And sought anew the soother of her pain.

On speculation's wings the cash was sent;
Lightly it came, and with the winds it went;

And David saw each airy project fail,
By poverty alone secured from gaol.
His wife, though neither loving, nor beloved,
Since they were join'd, had twice a mother proved;
Although maternal love she seldom felt,
But wrathful stripes without distinction dealt;
For drams alone now gave her heart delight,
Her only comfort, morning, noon, and night!
When sober, stupid—drunk, a maniac mad;
Whate'er the price, the poison must be had.
I need not tell her oaths, and frantic din,
Or that her petticoat was sold for gin;
How crockery ware she would in shivers dash,
Or break the windows with a thundering crash,
Rush to the street half naked, lost to shame,
Abusing all with some opprobrious name!
Led home—would rave, laugh, cry, with frenzied brain,
Doze, dream, and wake—ere night get drunk again;
To scold her husband, tear his clothes and hair,
And, in return, his brutal blows to bear.
Such was the life this wretched woman led,
When all that dignifies the human form had fled.

On Mrs Morton when I cast my eye,
I thought of Widow Welsted with a sigh;
I hail'd the day that made her sorrows cease,
And bade her restless frame repose in peace.

I pause, to think, what rolling years have pass'd
Between this record's first page and its last;
What revolutions in the world have been;
What changes I have in my parish seen.
I've known the man whose trust was gold alone,
Who spurn'd the orphan's prayer, the widow's moan,
Whose splendour made the crowd with envy gaze,
Within the Parish Workhouse close his days:
I've seen the spendthrift turn the child of care,
The pauper left the wealthy miser's heir;
Young, old, rich, poor, oppressor and oppress'd,
Laid side by side, within the house of rest:
I've seen the infant I baptized and bless'd,
With blushing modesty and heaving breast,

Before me to the nuptial altar led—
Again I've prayed for blessings on her head;
Her I've beheld, in calm domestic life,
The tender mother and the loving wife;
And o'er her coffin, I've discharged my trust,
Pronounced the Christian's hope, and "Dust to dust!"
All these, to me, emphatically say,
"Reflect—you've had a long and peaceful day:"
While stiffen'd limbs, dim eyes, and wrinkled face,
The trembling hand, with which these lines I trace,
Like clouds that gather round the setting sun,
Proclaim that lengthen'd day is nearly done.
And thou, whose eye explores this closing page,
In life's gay Spring, or Autumn's ripen'd age,
Hast often seen the cankerworm devour
The promised bloom, and nip the budding flower,—
Beheld the woodman, with his weapon keen,
Lay low the broad elm, clothed in leafy green;
And thou hast mark'd the tree with age decay,
Whose wither'd branches scorn'd the dews of May.
Her kind farewell the Muse would fain impart,
And, if she could, engrave upon thy heart,

What now she fondly whispers in thy ear,
That thou art but a wandering pilgrim here:
Thy journey closed—whate'er thy measured span,
Wisdom and spotless life, are ripe old age to man.

END OF THE CHARACTERS.

TALES.

THE PLOUGHMAN'S DEATH AND BURIAL.

In numbers soft and warm, in youthful fire,
The "Farmer's Ingle" flow'd in Doric strain;
But softer, sweeter far, the magic lyre,
When Nature taught her bairn, on Coila's plain,
To sing the "Cottar" and his youngling train,—
The thrifty mither, garrulous and kind,
The blushing maiden and the bashful swain,
The father's love, with counsel sage combined,
His prayer and song of praise, and humble, heaven-ward mind.

Alas! the mighty Minstrel's tale is tauld;
His warbling lyre hangs silent and unstrung;
Dissolved in death, his glowing heart is cauld,
Closed his bright e'e, and mute his tuneful tongue,

Whose song of rural bliss symphonious rung.
I fain would touch a sad but kindred string,
And sketch a rural theme as yet unsung,
Though rude the hand that o'er the chords I fling:
But laigh the Muse maun flee, with moulted, fluttering wing.

The chattering sparrow, hovering in the air,
May imp the wood-lark soaring in the sky;
Presumptuous he the eagle's track may dare,
Although his fate forbids to rise so high:
The tiny wren across the brake may fly,
And, chirping, twitter on the birken spray,
Above the stream that murmurs softly by,
Where Philomela pour'd her melting lay:
We hail the twinkling star, when set the orb of day.

And he whose heart, like mine, delights to rove,
With fond remembrance, o'er the rural scene,
By trotting burnie, down the beechen grove,
On broom-clad brae, brown heath, or daisied green,
Perhaps in converse with his lovely Jean,
With bright black e'e, and cheek like morning fair,—

When busy Memory whispers what has been,
May in my song past joys and sorrows share;
Nor harshly blame the Muse, though long she linger there.

The gloamin' sheens with streaks of gowden light,
Grim Winter's frosty breath forgets to blaw,
And lessens daily to the ploughman's sight
Schihallion's sheeted wreaths of drifted snaw;
The birks are budding bonny in the shaw,
Blithe gowans glinting on the greensward lea,
Glen, bank, and brae, the primrose busks fu' braw,
And to its bosom wooes the eident bee,
As lightsome Spring returns, to glad the heart and e'e!

The lamb leaps lightly on the flowery green,
Before the sun has drunk the morning dew;
The lav'rock carols saftly, though unseen,
Aloft, and lost amidst the æther blue;
The farmer stalks in sheet of snaw-white hue;
Behind him whistles blithe the harrow-boy:
Is there who can the gladsome scene review—
See Nature's smile and Labour's blithe employ—
And still his heart refuse to join the general joy?

Yes; there is one cannot the pleasure share,
Whose plough lies rusting in the stubble field—
Who pines and shivers in the vernal air—
Who once could guide the plough, the sickle wield;
But now he sighs to see his glebe untill'd;
For sickness warns him of approaching doom;
He feels that he must to the Conqueror yield:
No more for him Spring sheds her genial bloom,
And summer suns maun shine above his grassy tomb;

And while he seeks to fix his hopes on high,
With humble heart is to his fate resign'd;
Yet Nature in his bosom prompts the sigh
O'er those he loves, and now maun leave behind.
A thousand anxious thoughts rush o'er his mind,—
The husband and the father round his heart
Still closely cling, with tenderest ties entwined:
He turns his head to hide the tears that start;
Though not afraid to die, 'tis pain with these to part.

He still could lean upon his daughter's arm,
And she would lead him, at the noon-tide hour,

When April suns were shining saft and warm,
And gently seat him in the woodbine bower;
While he would gaze upon this budding flower;
Then fondly sighing, press her mither's hand,
In silence musing on the Tyrant's power,
Whose stroke will snap the dear domestic band,
Whom cunning cannot charm, nor skill, nor power withstand.

'Twas thus, one morn, he thought, and sigh'd, and smiled,
When clouds were flitting lightly o'er the sun;
He raised his e'e, with look serenely mild,
And said, "I feel my race is nearly run;
Though Nature, shrinking, still the stroke would shun,
Would fondly still the parting hour prolong;
Yet Heaven is just—and let His will be done—
He will not, cannot do His creature wrong,
Although I grieve to leave whom I have loved so long!

"But now, methinks, 'twere wise to bid farewell,
Ere I am summon'd to my dying bed—
Ere Death, relentless, storm the citadel,
His icy fingers on my bosom spread,

When parch'd my lips—perhaps my reason fled,
When neighbours throng, and friends stand weeping by,
Or smooth the pillow for my weary head,
Or watch to hear the last expiring sigh
That snaps the filmy thread, and rends the tender tie.

"Yes, I would fain behold each beauteous face,
While yet the tide of life my bosom warms;
My Mary's lip press with a last embrace—
Again behold my children's growing charms,
And fondly fold them in a father's arms;
And, e'er I writhe beneath the killing dart,
Ere fainting Nature feel its dread alarms,
Would counsel, comfort to you all impart,
Wipe every watery e'e, and sooth each sorrowing heart."

The evening sun hung o'er the mountains hi':
They placed the ploughman in his easy-chair;
New lustre lighted up his languid e'e;
His brow besprent with thin and lyart hair
Rose full and broad—betrayed no carking care;
A hectic glowed upon his wrinkled cheek

So thin, his smile nae langer dimpled there;
The shaded sunbeam, through the misty reek,
Fell saftly on a face serenely mild and meek.

It was a sad and solemn sight to see
The parting scene of friends so fondly dear,—
The father leaning on the mither's knee—
The bairns around in semicircle near;
In every e'e a bright and trembling tear;
And there was one, whom love had hither led,
Nor son, nor brither—yet no stranger here,
Whose heart with theirs in kindred sorrow bled,
And long'd to drink the tears the blooming daughter shed.

His glistening e'e the auld man slowly raised,
While Mary's hand in his was fondly press'd,
On those around in solemn silence gazed
With strong emotion struggling in his breast:
He brush'd a tear that would not be suppress'd—
Look'd round the circle, on each dear loved child,
And calmly, thus the mournful throng address'd,
In accents solemn, but benignly mild,
As erst in youthful love he on his Mary smiled.

"Dear Mary, we have lang and fondly loved;
Our wedded life has been a summer-day;
Our pleasures many, and if cares we proved,
Yet they, like morning clouds, soon pass'd away;
Then safter seem'd to sheen the sunny ray,
As we have often seen the passing shower
Refresh the fields, make Nature look more gay,
With richer beauties clothe the blossom'd flower,
And sweeter fragrance breath around our woodbine bower.

"We've sailed along a smooth and summer sea,
And seldom thought how rapid was the stream;
Enjoyed the scene, and talked of bliss to be;
And, while we bask'd in Love's meridian beam,
Forgot that we maun meet his parting gleam—
Maun hear the fatal breakers round us roar,
And wauken from our short, but pleasing dream:
That hour is come—and I maun go before,
To bid my Mary hail, upon a happier shore.

"Yes, we have seen our sunny moments glide,
While love forbade to tent their rapid flight;

But sublunary bliss will never bide;
The langest, happiest day, maun close in night;
Yet is our gloamin' calm and cloudless light;
Although the night be lang, the darkness deep,
They are the harbingers of morning bright,
When we shall wauken from our silent sleep,
Where light for ever shines, and love forgets to weep.

"Ye olive plants, which have our union crown'd,
I need not say that all are fondly dear;
Although our parting must your bosoms wound,
Suppress the sigh, and wipe the bootless tear;
But calmly listen with attentive ear:
I would not speak to give your young hearts pain;
Yet, oh! a father's parting counsels hear,
And Heaven forefend that I should speak in vain!
Still bear them in your mind, still in your heart retain.

"The dawn of wisdom is, to fear the Lord,
Who marks your goings out and comings in;
And be His grace and guidance still implored,
To keep your footsteps from the paths of sin;

For perfect happiness is peace within,
Unknown to those by headlong passions driven;
But oh! my bairns, your course betimes begin,
With humble hearts, and pray that grace be given,
Your passions still to rein, and fix your trust in Heaven.

"For oh! my children, ever bear in mind
That man is weak, and mortal flesh is frail,
His heart to vice and vanity inclined,
And in the world temptations oft assail,
And sometimes o'er the wise resolve prevail,
With him who leans upon his strength alone;
And such, too late, their confidence bewail,
Their heedless folly bitterly bemoan—
Seed scatter'd to the winds, or on the waters sown!

"Though Pleasure sheds her most seductive charms
To win the wealthy to her saft embrace,
She can decoy the rustic to her arms,
And lure the peasant onward in the chase,
Who lags at last, still distanced in the race:
Her paths are many, all with snares beset,

New beauties blushing on her changing face;
To ride, shoot, game, drink, swear, and run in debt,
And last, though far from least, is woman's witching net.

"Oh! then beware of Pleasure's siren smiles,
For they are safter than the summer morn;
Her glamour many a simple heart beguiles;
Soon fade her flowers, but sharply stings her thorn;
Lost friends, reproach, disgrace, and public scorn,
And, keener still, the pang of guilt and shame;
Deserted, shunn'd, her victim pines forlorn,
With few to pity, many still to blame,
Health broken, fortune lost, and stain'd a hapless name.

"Let not your hours in idleness be spent,
But never delve in Mammon's miry fen;
With honest industry be aye content,
And always measure to your fellow men
In word and deed as you would wish again:
Indulge not envy, malice, wrath, and strife;
For all are hateful in Omniscient ken;
And if you wish to lead a peaceful life,
Aye shun the gossip thrang, where clash and claiks are rife."

He paused for breath—his full heart fondly heaved,
And thus resumed: "When Rumour tells her tale,
True Charity will aye in heart be grieved
That Vice and Folly in the world prevail;
But Calumny may innocence assail,
And foul Reproach may stain a spotless name;
Or, should your neighbour slip—for man is frail—
Oh! rather blush, than propagate the shame;
No tender heart delights to wound another's fame.

"Let never want, and homeless, helpless age,
Unheeded pour their plaint, in vain implore;
Some wanderer, in his weary pilgrimage,
Perhaps may leave a blessing at your door.
Alms to the needy will not waste your store,
Nor, want relieved, e'er make your little less:
A feeling heart will make your treasure more:
Whene'er the widow and the orphan bless,
Their prayers will mount on high, pour'd in their deep distress.

"Dear bairns! I leave your mither to your love,
On Heaven and you maun be her stay and trust;

And if you hope a blessing from above,
Be kind to her when I am laid in dust.
The time may come, when age her mind may rust,
Sickness and poverty may her betide.
I see your tears—they say you will, you must
Be still her friends, in whom she may confide—
That you will sooth her woes, and for her wants provide.

"Nor tongue nor pen can to your minds impart
A father's love, a mither's tender care;
'Tis not in youth to ken a parent's heart,
Or read what Nature's hand has written there,—
The hopes and fears that they are doom'd to share—
To nurse the frame, to form the infant mind,
What toils will they endure, what dangers dare!
The sleepless night, with love and care combined—
The pang that wrings the heart when children prove unkind!

"And be this truth aye on your minds imprest,
While health and youth within your bosoms glow,
That age will come: This world is not your rest;
You are but strangers, pilgrims passing through.

Grasp not too fast your dearest bliss below;
For, like the snaw 't will melt within your grip;
Your laughing cup may seem to overflow,
And while you stoop the balmy draught to sip,
The dark decrees of Fate may dash it from your lip.

" Yet life, my bairns, is still a pleasant land—
Has many a joy that man may freely use;
For bounteous Heaven has dealt with liberal hand,
And none but fools the bounty would refuse:
Yet, though the banquet haply seem profuse,
Of some partake—of others scarcely taste;
Aye keep in mind, that they who bliss abuse
Will soonest still their stock of pleasure waste;
The cup that's slowly drain'd leaves aye the richest zest."

Again the peasant paused, and fixed his e'e
On him who stood by beauteous Ellen's side;
Then kindly said, " Young man, with joy I see
The mutual love which Nature cannot hide:
Although that bliss must be to me denied,
To see you both before the altar bow,

To see my Ellen blush a blooming bride,
And hear your lips confirm the nuptial vow,
Come, lead her to my arms, and take my blessing now!"

He fondly clasp'd her to his heaving breast,
The gentle pressure made his heart expand;
The maiden's glowing cheek his pale lip press'd;
He raised his e'e, with look benignly bland,
And saw the modest youth before him stand:
With look of love and melting tenderness,
He gently took his daughter's trembling hand,
Placed it in his—"May Heaven unite and bless
Your guileless hearts," he said, "in love and happiness!"

Again he drew his gentle Mary near;
His pale lip quiver'd, dim his watery e'e;
He from her wan cheek kiss'd the trickling tear,
And said, "Dear Mary, cease to weep for me;
Rejoice that soon my spirit shall be free
From all this weary load of cumbering clay;
With resignation bend to Heaven's decree;
I hourly feel my feeble strength decay,
And long to sink asleep, to wake in endless day!"

And now before his feet the children fell ;
His hand was laid on every bending head ;
He kiss'd and bless'd them all, and bade farewell,
While tears of filial tenderness were shed :
A passing hectic o'er his pale cheek fled,
A clammy sweat stood on his wrinkled face,
Down droop'd his head—" Oh ! raise me up," he said,
" And leave me not—a change must soon take place ;
Before me shadows swim, and Nature sinks apace !"

The setting sun behind a purple cloud,
Just left a gowden streak along the sky,
Then wrapt him in his brightly-border'd shroud,
Which soon was changed to crimson canopy :
But, hark! whence comes that groan, that rending sigh ?—
From one who ne'er shall see the morning dawn,
Whose wildering look is fix'd on vacancy :
Pale falls the moonlight on the dewy lawn,
But paler was that lip, when life's last breath was drawn.

And all is still around the deathful bed ;
The struggle 's o'er, the Conqueror's triumph won ;

Lone silence hovers o'er the victim's head;
His clay lies stiff and cold—the spirit flown:
The strong man lies, by greater might undone,
His strength subdued, his dauntless prowess cow'd,
In linen white, by maidens' fingers spun;
His bridal-sheet, his aged banes are row'd,
The sheet of nuptial love is his funereal shroud.

To sooth their griefs, this family of love
Seek comfort from the book of sacred lore,
And raise their hearts to Him who sits above,
Who for mankind wrath, shame, and suffering bore,
And now, their Mediator, gone before—
That where He is, there may His servants be,
When this short scene of earthly trial 's o'er,
When He who sets from sin and sorrow free,
Shall wipe out every stain, the tear from every e'e.

And now they sing how man is like the grass;
(In Martyrs' sweet, but melancholy lays);
As shadows fly, so generations pass;
As falls the fading flower, so man decays:

They sing the shortness of our number'd days;
Threescore and ten years our allotted span:
Sing how inscrutable the Almighty's ways;
Too dark and deep for mortal skill to scan;
And deprecate His wrath on weak and erring man.

And now they kneel, in humble, heartfelt prayer,
Before the footstool of the Heavenly throne;
Their weakness and unworthiness declare,
With thanks for Him who did for guilt atone;
And only in that sacred name alone,
They pray to bear in mind their latter end,—
That he would hear and sooth the mourner's moan,
Aye be the widow's and the orphan's friend,
And grant His promised grace to guide them to the end.

The gentle Ellen wipes her tearful e'e,
And leads her mother to a widow'd bed,
And whispers comfort—but it cannot be;
For sleep has from her downy pillow fled,
And sighs are heaved, and secret tears are shed:
Yet though her heart has never ceased to mourn,

Light dreaming slumbers hover round her head,
Of him for ever from her bosom torn;
She wakes to weep again, forsaken and forlorn.

Another dreary day has lingering pass'd;
The sun is sinking in the welkin clear;
The coffin comes—and she must look her last
On his remains, so long, so fondly dear:
Like wither'd leaf in lap of Autumn sere,
She sees him laid within his narrow cell;
His pale, cauld cheek bedew'd with many a tear—
The parting tribute on his bosom fell—
She bows her drooping head, and sighs a last farewell!

No sable-border'd sheet proclaims the tale:
Twa friends, in black, invite the neighbours round,
Both rich and poor, residing in the vale,
To bear their brother to the hallowed ground;
And such their love, that none are absent found.
At noon-tide hour, in Sunday's garb they meet,
Or blue, or black, with use and age embrown'd:
A dram does every guest at entrance greet:
Now seated in the barn, they talk, and drink, and eat.

The parish minister, of gentle heart,
Perhaps the widow's lone retreat will seek,
That he may comfort to her mind impart,
And words of heavenly consolation speak:
Well does he know the human heart is weak,
And well aware that her's is wounded sore:
He kindly frames his words in accents meek,
And guides her view to that celestial shore
"Where death-divided friends shall meet to part no more."

Across the threshold, by his footsteps worn,
Who never more that rustic floor shall tread,
The corpse is softly and in silence borne;
And now the pall is o'er the coffin spread,—
The widow, wailing, as she bears his head:
Her heart is full, and still to nature true,
Again she clasps the dear departed dead;
Fresh streaming tears the sable pall bedew,
Till kindly led away, she sobs her last adieu.

Far down the vale they slowly wind along;
Most part a mournful melancholy train,

Though haply some amidst the motley throng
Will introduce discourse ill-timed and vain:
And now the crowd is blackening on the plain,
And pealing slow is heard the funeral bell;
Dim through the trees appears the hallowed fane,
That marks the spot where death and darkness dwell;
And louder on the ear now strikes the solemn knell.

And now, with careful feet, they forward pass,
O'er nameless grave, and time-worn, moss-clad stone;
'Midst nettles, hemlock, and the long rank grass,
Which waves o'er many a scatter'd mouldering bone:
Such are the trophies of the Tyrant's throne,
Whose subjects sleep in solemn silence round,
Where Love forgets to smile, and Grief to moan;
The rich man's tomb with lying marble crown'd,
The peasant's nameless grave beneath the grassy mound.

Now o'er their heads the broad plane's branches wave,
Obscure the sun, and shed a solemn gloom:
Before them yawns the deep, insatiate grave,
The father's dust dug from its darksome womb;

The sire displaced, to give his children room ;
And hence with man the change is never o'er,
In life and death, the cradle and the tomb :
Thus waves behind impel the waves before,
Till all expire in foam, or sleep upon the shore.

With gentle care the coffin'd clay descends,
And saftly rests upon its mouldy bed.
While dust with dust in solemn silence blends,
Each tongue is mute, uncover'd every head ;
Still fix'd they stand, and gaze upon the dead.
With all the sexton's skill the grave is dress'd ;
A grassy turf, with studied care is spread :
The gowan smiles above his clay-cold breast,
And saft the dews of even fall on his bed of rest.

That spot the widow'd mother aft will seek,
On Sundays passing to the house of prayer ;
Again the tear steal o'er her wither'd cheek,
As sad she stands, a silent mourner there :
His children, too, will to his grave repair,
And o'er the turf, in filial sorrow sigh :

Haply, some neighbour comes their griefs to share,
Or scan the head-stane with inquiring eye,
And spell the simple lines, that say, " Prepare to die !"

The blazon'd scutcheon and the marble bust
May grace the mighty in the gloomy pile,—
A trophied tomb above his titled dust,
In high-plumed hearse borne to the lonely aisle,
With fulsome epitaph in labour'd style :
But none shall o'er his mouldering ashes weep ;
Nor flower nor sunbeam on his grave shall smile,
Nor heir nor widow e'er disturb his sleep,
Forsaken and forgot, in damp and darkness deep.

TALES.

MARY SCOTT OF EDEN-KNOW.

A Fragment.

In his early years, the Author has often heard the outline of the following tale recited by an old woman who had an inexhaustible fund of traditionary and superstitious lore. According to the relation of this hoary chronicler, the appearance of Mary's mother after death was a contrivance of the Abbot, assisted by his monks, for the purpose of promoting his views in the seduction of the daughter.

"Despair, that solitary stands,
And wrings a halter in his hands."

Hamilton of Bangour.

"WHY is that spot so brown and bare,
And this beside so fair and green?
Why blooms there here the wild-rose fair,
And there a barren waste is seen?

"Here waves a birch, both green and gay;
And there a naked wither'd thorn;
That wantons in the winds of May,
This mocks the softest dews of morn!

"Why does the linnet love to sing
Upon the birch's slender spray;
But, o'er the thorn, with fluttering wing,
Affrighted flies, and hastes away?

"Why waves the gentle primrose pale,
The earliest of the infant year?
Beneath the bleak and stormy gale
The purple violet blossoms here?

"Whence comes that dim and shadowy sprite,
Oft seen to glide at twilight hour,
Like maiden robed in spotless white,
With bended head like drooping flower?

"And swains have seen a spectre there—
A wandering shade in sable weed,
That wrings its hands in sad despair,
As if it rued some reckless deed;

"And on that spot, with wild-flowers dress'd,
With bended knees is seen to creep,
And rend its hair, and beat its breast,
And wailing loud is heard to weep.

"But should the white-robed spectre rise,
It utters deep and hollow groans;
And then, with wild, unearthly cries,
It sinks among these moss-clad stones:

"While there, a blue and baleful flame
Gleams horrible to human sight;
And shrieks that thrill the mortal frame,
Are mingling with the winds of night.

"Such are the tales by shepherds told;
And this what they have heard and seen,
When they have watch'd their evening fold,
And darkness dimm'd the daisied green.

"Long hast thou trode this earthly stage,
Thy natal spot the neighbouring vale;
Thou canst unroll Time's bygone page—
Explain to me this wondrous tale!"

'Twas thus a youthful stranger spoke
To one with snowy honours crown'd,
Who careful watch'd his little flock
Which wandering browsed and bleated round.

The shepherd shook his hoary head,
And meekly bow'd in humble guise;
A hectic o'er his pale cheek fled,
And brighter beam'd his faded eyes.

"Stranger," he said, "the sun is low;
And should I now your wish fulfil,
Before I close, his parting glow
Would fade upon the distant hill.

"Yet on this mossy bank we'll lean,
If you can rest and spare the time;
And, shaded by these birches green,
I'll tell the tale in artless rhyme.

"You see yon hoary turrets rise
In ruin'd, but majestic form;
And lift their grey heads to the skies,
Defying winter's wildest storm:

"Religion claim'd them for her own—
The sacred fane for praise and prayer;
But priestly Pride had fix'd her throne,
And monks and friars fatten'd there.

" They had their herds in every stall,
Their flocks in every fold around;
Earth gave her treasures at their call,
Their brows with rosy chaplets bound.

" Though Hymen had no worship there,
Nor known the chaste connubial chain,
For love and wine, and woman fair,
They seldom knew to sigh in vain:

" But mass was said and anthems sung,
And orisons at early morn;
And vesper-bells were nightly rung,
And cowls and humble vestments worn.

" And many a matron they confess'd,
And sooth'd the mourning widow's sigh—
Shed balm in many a maiden's breast,
And wiped the tear from beauty's eye.

" To sooth a jealous husband's ire,
They bore a never-failing spell,—
For they could doom to future fire,
And curse with candle, book, and bell!

"And magic keys hung at their belt,
Could every bolt below remove;
And they for gold their passports dealt,
That open'd all the gates above.

"Thus wealth and power were in their hands;
All trembled if they sternly spoke;
Even monarchs bow'd at their commands,
And bent beneath their priestly yoke.

"And there an Abbot once bore sway
(Tradition has not told his name),
Whose life was like a day in May,—
He knew no care and fear'd no shame.

"Laid on the lap of sensual bliss,
High-season'd food and sparkling wine—
The blooming cheek and wanton kiss
Were deem'd by him delights divine.

"Nature had been benignly kind,
And he improved her gifts by art,—
With manly form, capacious mind,
But cold and selfish, coward heart.

" Erect and tall on earth he trode—
On all around look'd proudly down;
With fate impending in his nod,
As he might deign to smile or frown.

" He deem'd the loveliest female flower
But as the blossom of the morn,
To breathe its sweets one little hour,
At eve lie withering and forlorn.

" And many a bud his breath had stain'd,
Blanch'd many a cheek, in early bloom;
And seen them fade without a friend,
Or sink neglected in the tomb.

" Around the venerable pile
The sons of toil and trade had place;
And modest beauty's winning smile
Was seen on many a maiden's face:

" But not a nymph who trode the green,
Could such transcendent beauty show,
Or launch the shafts of Love so keen,
As Mary Scott of Eden-Know!

"The evening sun, whose parting beam
Resplendent shone on Dickmount Law,
Or softly dimpled Brothock's stream,
A fairer maiden never saw.

"The stars that gem the azure sky,
Shed brilliant lustre o'er the night;
But brighter far was Mary's eye,
And lovelier shone its gentle light.

"Who has not seen the morning break,
And joyous hail'd the orient glow?
Such was the blush that warm'd the cheek
Of Mary Scott of Eden-Know!

"There was a sweetly-witching smile,
Which play'd around her dewy mouth,
That spoke a heart devoid of guile,
The seat of innocence and truth.

"Sweet is the breeze at evening hour,
Which o'er a bank of violets blows;
And sweet at morn the breathing flower,
When zephyrs kiss the dewy rose:

"But ne'er did Love such nectar sip,
From aught that breathes perfume below,
As that which linger'd on the lip
Of Mary Scott of Eden-Know!

"The circling arch above her eye
Adorn'd her forehead full and white:
The rainbow, when it spans the sky,
Seems not more perfect to the sight.

"In graceful ringlets, careless twined,
Light flow'd her glossy auburn hair;
Or sported in the gentle wind,
That took delight to wanton there.

"And wave it round her gentle neck—
So fair, it mock'd the mountain-snow;
For every grace combined to deck
The beauteous flower of Eden-Know!

"Her bosom, shaded from the sight,
So softly heaved, so gently fell,
That Fancy gazed with fond delight,
Where Love and Beauty seem'd to dwell.

"And soft as coos the turtle-dove,
Or strains by airy minstrels sung—
Sweet as the whisper'd vows of love,
The accents of her gentle tongue.

"Her slender hand was soft and fair,
And smoothly round her polish'd arm:
There was a grace in every air—
Each motion had a secret charm.

"Was there a face by all admired,
That lighted up Love's raptured glow,
Or Envy's secret pangs inspired—
'Twas Mary Scott's of Eden-Know!

"Her widow'd mother's pride and joy,
They lived a lone, sequester'd pair;
Nought could their guileless hearts annoy,
Nor chill'd by want, nor cross'd by care.

"But sorrow sought their lonely bower,
And sickness laid the mother low;
And many a silent midnight hour
Would Mary smile, to sooth her wo.

"Physicians sought to banish pain;
Confessors came to whisper peace;
The Abbot left his hallow'd fane,
From sin and sorrow to release.

"He bow'd above the matron's bed;
But often glanced with gloating eye,
And turn'd aside his reverend head,
To gaze on Mary, weeping nigh.

"The shaft of Death descended slow,
And kind the pious Abbot's care;
To cheer the mourner's house of wo,
Each evening sun beheld him there.

"The hour approach'd,—Death claim'd his prize:
And now was heard the mourner's wail,
As Mary closed her mother's eyes,
And press'd her lips, now cold and pale.

"The present for the corpse* was paid,
With liberal hand and pious love;
And holy monks their masses said,
To guide the soul to bliss above.

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* The corpse-present was an exaction by the Church, of a certain sum, accord-

"But still her mother's troubled sprite
Appear'd to find no place of rest;
And in the lone and darksome night
Shot terror through the daughter's breast:

"For it would glide across the room,
With folded hands and mournful air;
Then vanish in the viewless gloom,
And leave poor Mary in despair.

"Mass after mass was duly said,
And Ave Maries many a one:
And o'er her beads the troubled maid
Would weep from morn to setting sun.

"The Abbot's sympathetic soul
Led him to sooth the frighted fair:
The wandering spirit to control,
He sprinkled holy water there.

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ing to the circumstances of a family, on the death of any member thereof; and, being levied with great rigour, was often found very oppressive.—*See Lindsay of Pitscottie's History; Works of Sir David Lyndsay of the Mount; and Dr M'Crie's Life of John Knox.*

"For he would have a heart of stone
Who would not wish a spirit rest;
Or who would leave a maid alone,
Such terrors thrilling in her breast.

"Not such the reverend Abbot's heart;
For it could feel and warmly glow,
And ghostly counsel would impart
To Mary Scott of Eden-Know.

"And when, at midnight's dreary hour,
Approach'd the restless, wandering sprite,
He could not leave the haunted bower,
Till morning smiled with cheering light:

"For, in his presence, all would cease;
But nightly visits still began;
Nor was the mansion e'er at peace,
Unhallowed by the holy man.

"Week after week had pass'd away,
And nightly the intruder came;
Nor monk nor priest would it obey,—
The Abbot only it could tame.

"From Mary's cheek the rose had fled;
The lustre faded in her eyes;
The Abbot all his powers arrayed,
The restless sprite to exorcise.

"On Christmas-eve, the twilight sky
Saw him to Eden-Know repair,
Resolved to make the phantom fly,
And leave his benediction there.

"He spent the long and lingering night
With candle, book, and sacred bell:
But morning show'd her dawning light
Before he closed the priestly spell.

"The wandering spirit laid to rest,
No more appears at evening's gloom:
But peace has fled from Mary's breast—
Her cheek shows no returning bloom!

* * * * * *

"Her flowery carpet Spring has spread;
The green birch scatters fragrance round;
The verdant hawthorn lifts his head
With scented snow-white blossoms crown'd.

"'Tis now the merry month of May,
And gladness rings in glen and grove;
The blithesome ploughboy whistles gay,
The milk-maid trills her song of love:

"But who is she that strays alone,
A moping melancholy maid?
With downcast look, all wo-begone,
At twilight hour who seeks the shade?

"Her eye in faded lustre shines,
Like stars, when fogs float on the gale;
And, lost in thought, she musing pines,
With sallow cheek, lip blanch'd and pale.

"Erewhile she tript as lambkin light—
Now slow her steps, with pensive mien;
Her broider'd girdle seems too tight,
And much too short her kirtle green!

"And she her lonely couch must press,
In vain invoking balmy Sleep;
Or, plunged in dreams of dire distress,
Will wake, her wayward fate to weep.

"Alas! that one so young, so fair,
Should drink such bitter draughts of wo!
And shame to him who spread the snare
For Mary Scott of Eden-Know!

"But there is one who talks of love,
And bids the mourner weep no more,—
Who says his truth he'll fondly prove,
And guide her to a distant shore.

"There, blest with wealth and beauty's charms,
To care and busy tongues unknown,
He'll clasp her in his sheltering arms,
And live for love and her alone.

"'You cannot save my soul from shame,
Nor hide me from myself!' she cried;
'Forgot for ever be my name!
Would I had in my cradle died!

"'I loathe to live—yet dread to die,
Till tears have wash'd my guilt away;
Forlorn, I know not where to fly—
But here, I cannot, will not stay!'

" 'I'll bear you hence,' he softly said,
'Where, all unknown, your shame shall cease:
My love! of phantoms why afraid?
Your guilt absolved, repose in peace!'

" He gazed upon her faded charms,
And strove to banish all her fears;
He clasp'd her fondly in his arms,
And sought to kiss her streaming tears.

" She turn'd her head aside, and said,
'Your lips my cheek must never press,
Till your protecting hand has led
Me from this home of wretchedness.

" 'If you from shame, from death, would save,
Delay not—haste! my hour is near;
Or bid me hide me in the grave—
My heart is sick of lingering here!'

" 'Then hush your grief—be calm, my love!
To-morrow night shall set you free;
A boat in waiting at the cove
Shall bear us to a bark at sea.

" ' When you have heard the vesper-bell,
Then bid adieu to Eden-Know,
And meet me at St Ringan's Well,
And banish sadness from your brow.'

* * * * * *

" The vesper-bell has ceased to ring,
And murky darkness veils the sky;
And Mary, sadly sorrowing,
Has turn'd to heave her parting sigh.

" The Abbey-towers, amidst the gloom,
Were dimly seen in dusky air:
She thought upon her mother's tomb,
And wish'd that she were slumbering there.

" With trembling frame she forward press'd;
She fear'd, yet knew not what to dread:
But sad foreboding fill'd her breast
Of ills impending o'er her head.

" St Ringan's Well flows at her feet,
And chilly blows the hollow wind;
But where is he she came to meet,
Whom still her heart half fears to find?

"He comes! Her trembling hand he takes,
And bids her still her heart's alarms;
But every limb with terror shakes—
For she is in a stranger's arms!

* * * * * *

"A burning torch, with baleful glare,
Shed lustre o'er the gloom profound;
He forward led the trembling fair—
Then paused, and bade her look around.

"A hasty glance the fair one gave,
But started back in wild affright:
She saw a deep and yawning grave
Beneath the torch's baleful light!

"'Behold,' he cried, 'your bridal bed,
And this the couch where you must rest:
That sod the pillow for your head,
And there a turf to wrap your breast!'

"Her throbbing brain with terror beat,
And horror chain'd her parched tongue:
She bow'd before the ruffian's feet,
And round his knees in silence clung.

" A brutal fire gleam'd in his eyes,
And deep his dark brow seem'd to lower:
Exulting o'er his beauteous prize,
He thus address'd the drooping flower.

" 'I would not wound a lady's ear;
But time admits not of delay:
If you can love—dismiss your fear,
I'll bear you hence ere break of day.

" 'Full well I know your virgin bloom
Was given to bless the Abbot's arms;
And he rewards you—with a tomb!
There seeks to hide your angel charms!

* * * *

" 'Come! let me lead you to yon bower:
I long to still that throbbing heart!
Vouchsafe to smile one little hour,
And we will long ere day depart!'

" Her keen eye flash'd indignant scorn;
She felt her brain like burning flame:
'Although I am a wretch forlorn—
Though plunged in sin—not lost to shame!

"'No farther guilt my soul shall stain;
My bleeding heart deplores the past:
Since every earthly hope is vain,
I here shall find repose at last!'

"He laid his arm around her waist,
(The trembling fair could hardly stand);
One hand her throbbing bosom press'd,
The other waved a glittering brand.

"'Now, love—or death!' the ruffian said,
'Or in my arms—or there you lie!'
'Monster! stand off! My choice is made!
Your task fulfil—and let me die!'

* * * * * *

"Darkness and silence reign around,
Except one deep and rending groan!
The grave reëchoes back the sound!—
'Tis past—the deed of death is done!

"Deep in her dark unhallowed bed,
Beyond the reach of human wo,
A grassy turf above her head,
Lies Mary Scott of Eden-Know!

" So, when the chill and pelting shower
Upon the lily's breast descends,
And stains the sweetly spotless flower,
As in the dust its bosom bends,—

" The torrent comes with sudden sweep,
And bears away the blighted bloom;
'Midst earth and clay 'tis buried deep,
Or lost in ocean's ample womb.

" The Abbot lives: Time speeds his flight,
And seven long years have roll'd away;
Still he can taste of Love's delight,
In wine and wassail spend the day.

" No tear for Mary's fate is given—
Forgot that face he deem'd so fair:
But all her wrongs are writ in heaven—
The Abbot's guilt recorded there.

" There is a Monk who cannot rest—
Who raves about St Ringan's Well:
Some secret guilt is in his breast,
He cannot hide—and fears to tell.

" And oft alone he wanders there ;
And when he to his cell returns,
He looks the image of Despair,
And through the long night sadly mourns.

" He says his hands have spots of blood,
And beauty's tears his bosom stain ;
To wash them clean, the ocean-flood
Would all its waters pour in vain.

" The Monks have heard with wondering ear,
And to the Abbot bear the tale ;
And though he careless seems to hear,
His purple cheek grows ghostly pale.

" At midnight hour he seeks the cell :
The Monk is mumbling o'er a prayer ;
But cries, ' Now for St Ringan's Well !
The moon shines bright—I'll guide you there !

" ' There is a spot with flowers emboss'd,
The loveliest you have ever seen ;
In Summer's drought and Winter's frost,
Its turf is ever gay and green.

" 'There Spring expands her earliest bloom,
And Autumn's lingering flowerets glow,—
They blossom on the lonely tomb
Of Mary Scott of Eden-Know!

" 'The banks are green, the flowers are fair,
Around St Ringan's crystal Well:
Yet Mary's spirit rests not there,
But nightly haunts me in my cell.

" 'I see her weep, I hear her sigh:
Her tears are blood, her sighs are flame!
Her breath has scorch'd my hot brain dry!
Her tears have chill'd my shivering frame!'

" The Abbot fear'd this frantic fool
Might secret deeds long past reveal,—
And soon resolved his brain to cool,
His babbling lips in silence seal.

" He said, 'You want both food and rest:
I'll fetch a flask of generous wine;
'Twill sooth and warm your aching breast—
A safe and sovereign anodyne.'

"The Abbot has return'd with speed:
The Monk has drain'd the goblet deep;—
The potent beverage must succeed,
For it has laid him sound asleep!

"Yes—it has cool'd his burning brain!
His crimes, and griefs, and sufferings o'er,
He slumbers, ne'er to wake again
Till time and death shall be no more!

* * * * * *

"Saint Ringan's Well is bubbling clear;
Its crystal streamlet speeds away;
A grassy hillock rises near,
With blooming wild-flowers ever gay:

"The snow-white daisy rears its crest,
The yellow kingcup, harebell blue;
The wild-rose spreads its blushing breast,
And woodbine scents the morning dew:

"But who is he that musing stands,
And gazes on the turf so green,
With trembling knees and folded hands,
And horror pictured on his mien?

" The purple twilight softly glows,
And still the maniac lingers there:
He talks and raves of crimes and woes,
And wrings his hands in wild despair.

" The waning moon, in cloudy skies,
Sees him on Mary's tomb reclined:
His deepening groans and hollow sighs
Are mingled with the midnight wind!

* * * * * *

" The morning sun his lustre shed;
The frenzied maniac lay at rest;
On lovely Mary's grassy bed,
His blood had stain'd the daisy's breast.

" So sure the stroke his hand essay'd,
So soon the seat of life it found,
His hand still clutch'd the fatal blade,
And left it in the gaping wound!

" They dug his grave by Mary's side;
A green grass turf was o'er it spread;
But there each blade of verdure died—
No dew-drop falls above his bed!

" Pray for the Abbot's sinful sprite;
His dust, dishonour'd, lies below!
And bid the blooming turf lie light
On Mary Scott of Eden-Know!"

TALES.

THE PIPER OF DICKMOUNT-LAW.

The scene of the following traditionary tale lies on the coast, a few miles north-east of Arbroath. The romantic caves are well known; some of which run quite through rocks, and land him who explores them on a spot where all is new around him. One is dark, and runs to great extent under ground. In the ages of ignorance and superstition, this was named the "Forbidden Cave," and firmly believed to be occupied by dæmons from the infernal regions. Even in the early part of the last century, few would have been found possessed of sufficient fortitude to venture within its portal. I have often heard the outline of the tale told by my grandmother; although I have taken the liberty of altering the catastrophe; which, as related by her, was truly horrible. Dickmount-Law is more than a mile distant from the entrance of the cave, where, according to tradition, the piper and his wife entered, when returning drunk from a wedding. Next morning, the piper was heard at Dickmount-Law, sounding his drone; also, his wife singing the following distich, in a doleful tone.

"Lone, lost, and weary, plays Tammy Tyrie,
Beneath the Barns of Dickmount-Law."

Soon after, the piper's dog was seen to issue from the cave, with such accompaniments as I shall not shock the feelings by naming; but they plainly indicated the death of his mistress. The piper continued to play incessantly for some nights and days after, but was never more seen on earth. Thus runs the current tradition; which, at one period, was firmly believed by many.

I CHANT the deeds of departed days,
A tale of the olden time,
Though limpingly lags on my verse,
And careless is my rhyme.

If you've ever been where rude rocks rise,
By Brothock's winding shore,
Where Becket's ruin'd Abbey stands,
In age sublimely hoar,—

You've seen the deep indented caves,
The work of Nature's hand;
And their yawning fronts, where wild waves dash,
As they rush o'er the strand.

And haply, you have heard the tale
Of the dark Forbidden Cave,
Where none who enter'd e'er return'd,
To find an earthly grave.

When the waning moon hung in the West,
With mildew on her horn,
Strange shapes would rise from the deep, dark sea,
On the bounding billows borne.

In wintry winds, a boat of fire,
Steer'd by a spectre form,
Would proudly rise on the mountain-wave,
Light gliding in the storm;

Like arrow from a well-bent bow,
Would shoot athwart the gloom,
And, swifter than the speed of light,
Dart in its darksome womb.

Then the paddling oars were heard to plash,
Amidst the salt sea foam;
And a hollow voice, from its dark recess,
Would cry, "You're welcome home!"

Then shouts of wild unearthly glee
Would strike the listening ear;
And laughter loud, and revelry,
Unmeet for man to hear.

The sea-fowls, sleeping in their nests,
Would wake with wailing scream;
And the fisher, laid on his homely couch,
Would start in a frightful dream.

The sheep would bleat in the distant fold,
As the grey rocks echoed round;
And stars would shoot in the midnight sky,
So awful was the sound.

The boldest dog was afraid to bark ;
No cock would dare to crow ;
And the rustling leaves of the green beech-tree
Would blighted lie below.

The fox would howl with frightful cry,
As he sat on the dinling hill ;
And the sail on the passing ship would flap,
Though the winds of heaven were still.

The frighten'd fish forgot to swim,
And jump'd with quivering fin ;
The limpet clung to the tangled crag,
So dreadful was the din.

Down dived beneath the briny flood
The monsters of the deep ;
And the hoary seal, with shaggy head,
Behind the rocks would creep.

And then would wake the winds of heaven,
And the bellowing tempests roar ;
And the mountain-wave, with curling head,
Would lash the sounding shore.

And never a boat would take the sea
Till the Sabbath-bell had rung;
Nor fisher dared to leave the land
Till holy mass was sung.

Tom Tyrie was a man of might,
Who lived at Dickmount-Law,
And none like him, besouth the Dee,
Could Highland bagpipe blaw.

When the bridegroom went to meet his bride,
The piper aye cheer'd him on;
And the harvest-home was dull and sad
Without his mirthful drone.

Kate Gray, his wife, had a rosy cheek,
And bright was her black eye;
With love, plain fare, and good brown ale,
Their years flew swiftly by.

Tom said, "I go to a wedding-feast—
Kate, you'll gang to the sea;
The moon is round, and the crabs are rich,
And you'll gather a dish for me."

The sun shines bright, and bonny Kate
Trips lightly o'er the lea;
And now she stems the rippling wave,
Coats kilted to her knee.

Deep, deep in a pool, a crab she saw,
With claws of wondrous size;
And plunging deep, she dragg'd him out,
Exulting o'er her prize.

Her basket full, she lean'd her down,
To rest on a hillock green;
When heaviness came o'er her heart,
And sleep soon closed her e'en.

She dozed and dream'd—no matter what,
And waken'd wild and lone:
Her basket stood close by her side,
But the matchless crab was gone.

She sought him east, and she sought him west,
Where'er she thought he'd sprawl;
And just in the jaws of the haunted cave
She beheld him swiftly crawl.

His elastic claws were large and long,
And over the stones he hies:
Kate follow'd fast, for loath was she
To lose so rich a prize.

She stoops—but still he shuns her grasp;
Alas for hapless Kate!
His sidelong strides decoy her on,
And lure her to her fate.

Within the foul Forbidden Cave
She caught him by the claw,
And turn'd around to bear him out,
Then hie to Dickmount-Law.

But dark clouds now bedim the sky,
And loud is Ocean's roar;
The foaming billows, mountain-high,
Are dashing round the shore.

Loud thunders roll along the heavens;
The rocks around her quake;
With hollow echoes long and deep
She feels the cavern shake.

The fire-flaught spreads in sheets of flame,
Or shoots in arrowy stream;
Dark frowns the cavern's hoary sides
Beneath the lurid gleam.

Still presses on the rolling wave—
More deep the gloom profound;
Kate's far in the Forbidden Cave,
And all is darkness round!

On Dickmount-Law the evening sun
Sheds soft and golden sheen;
The birds sing blithe in every bush;
Sweet smells the meadow green.

Kingblythmont-bank is fair to see,
For love and mirth are there;
A blushing bride and blithe bridegroom
Have banish'd every care.

Tam Tyrie winds his humming drone,
And looks both fond and fain
On light-heel'd lasses in the dance,
With crotchets in his brain.

Oh! little does the Minstrel ween
Of wife and children dear—
How they must pass the cheerless night,
To them both long and drear.

So rare the Minstrel's melody,
So rich their mirthful fun,
The sun was peeping from the sea
Before their sport was done.

With bagpipe dumb, below his arm,
Tam homeward bends his way:
His brow with nappy ale was warm,
His heart was light and gay.

His little dog across the plain
The leveret would pursue,
Tear up the gowans in his teeth,
And frisk among the dew.

At home, instead of the welcome smile,
He beheld his children weep;
And cold and pale grew the piper's cheek,
To think on the salt sea deep.

The bonny lasses were now forgot,
As he hurried down the hill;
For though he had a light wandering eye,
Kate reign'd in his bosom still.

He looked long among craigs and rocks,
And wearily wander'd round:
At last, he resolved to touch his pipe,
Convinced she would know the sound.

The dog ran east, and the dog ran west;
He smell'd at the salt sea foam;
He snuff'd along the shells and sand,
Where the hapless wife did roam.

He follow'd the scent till he came to the cave,
Where all was dark within,—
Stood still, and whined, and wagg'd his tail,
Afraid to venture in,—

Came back, and caught the piper's coat,
And look'd with his hazel e'e,
And said, as plain as a dog could speak,
"Dear master, go with me!"

He led the piper o'er the stones,
Till the cave was right before,
And tried to drag the Minstrel in,
As he finger'd his chanter o'er.

His sharp shrill pipe, and sounding drone,
Loud echoed in the air:
He tried to peep within the cave,
But all was darkness there.

The sun was warm—his throat was dry,
And sweat ran o'er his e'en;
And the piper thought of the good brown ale
He quaff'd so free yestreen.

He paused for breath, then jump'd in joy,
And forward fearless ran;
For Kate upon her piper smiled,
And show'd a flowing can.

"Oh! blessings on you, my bonny Kate!
Come here, my winsome dame!"
"It may not be—you must come to me,
For I cannot leave my hame.

" But come, dear Tam—we 've meat and drink,
And mirthful minstrels too:
I 've danced till the sweat ran o'er my brow;
But I 'll dance a reel with you!"

Her cheek had ne'er so richly glow'd,
Ne'er was her eye so bright;
Tam never thought that woman's face
Could give such dear delight.

He rush'd within the fatal cave,
To clasp her glowing charms,
And cried, " O come, my darling Kate,
And bless your husband's arms!"

She whisper'd softly in his ear,
" There 's one you cannot see,
Who seeks, by dint of glamour's guile,
To win my heart from thee:

" He 's now between me and the door;
I dare not mint to gang,
Lest he, by strength of magic spell,
Should work us deadly wrang."

A smile was on her dewy lip,
But a tear was in her e'e:
"To well or woe, to life or death,
Dear Kate, I'll gang with thee!"

As Orpheus for Eurydice,
Sought Pluto's dark abode,
So Tam, in love to darling Kate,
Took the unhallow'd road.

As in some lowering, dismal night,
Shines forth a trembling star,
Before them, in the darksome cave,
A spark was glimmering far.

Though long the road, they lightly pass'd,
And reach'd a palace fair;
A thousand lamps, in fragrance sweet,
Were brightly blazing there.

Above their heads resplendent moons
In purest azure roll'd;
The finely-tessellated floor
Was coral, mix'd with gold.

Tam gazed upon a fairy throng,
Lost in delirious trance:
Light as the bees on heather-bells,
They tread the mazy dance.

The Piper sat beside the Queen,
With ravish'd eyes and ears;
Melodious murmurs floating round,
The music of the spheres!

The King led Catherine to the floor;—
Dark flash'd the Piper's e'e:
The Queen, who saw his rising wrath,
Cried, "You shall dance with me!"

How sweet she smiled—how long they danced,
It boots not here to tell:
The King and Piper both were pleased,
So powerful was the spell.

But Kate thought on her bairns and home;
And, anxious to be gone,
She whisper'd in her husband's ear,
And bade him sound his drone.

He blew a Highland pibroch loud,
Made rocks around them rair;
The dancers vanish'd from the floor,
And all was darkness there!

The starry lamps no longer shine;
The golden floor is gone;
And Tam and Kate, in midnight gloom,
Sit on a cauld damp stone.

His drone had never bumm'd so loud;
So bauld he never blew;
So lightly on the sounding pipe
His fingers never flew.

At home, the bairns, around the fire
Blithe heard the chanter bum;
And bird and beast round Dickmount-Law
All gazed in silence dumb.

No piper was on hill or dale;
But aye they heard the sound;
And soon they heard the dinsome noise
Come dirling through the ground.

But Tam and Kate sat both enclosed
In night and darkness deep;
And round the piper's manly heart
Chill fear began to creep.

Kate felt the frog and loathsome toad
Slow crawling o'er her feet;
And snails and slime around the walls
Her trembling fingers meet.

Their faithful dog leap'd, lick'd, and fawn'd,
Impatient to be gone;
And seem'd to say, with earnest whine,
"Come! let me lead you on."

Kate loosed the garter from her leg;
The end was snatch'd by Spring:
The cur will thus the beggar lead,
And guide him in a string.

She took the piper on her arm,
And bade him briskly play;
And through the long Forbidden Cave
They slowly wend their way.

Thus through the labyrinth of Crete,
By Ariadne's thread,
The Grecian hero hail'd the sun,
By Love and Beauty led.

The sun shines soft, and the birds are blithe,
And Dickmount-Law is green;
But softer smiles the winsome Kate,
More blithe her piper's e'en.

TALES.

THE LEGEND OF THE BELL-ROCK.

The Bell-Rock is now known to Europe and America, from its conspicuous light-house; which, although inferior to the celebrated Pharos of Ptolemy, is perhaps the first, for elegance and utility united, in the modern world. Everybody knows that the Inch-Cape-Rock received the name of the Bell-Rock, from the traditionary story of a bell once tolling there; the machinery of which was kept in motion by the undulations of the tide. The credit of this benevolent invention has generally been attributed to a pious Abbot of Aberbrothock (Arbroath). It is also currently told, that the bell was carried away by an avaricious Dutchman; who, by the retributive justice of Providence, was afterwards wrecked on the same rock.

Hence the poem is conformable to popular tradition, the poetical embellishments being only in the subordinate parts of the story.

"Far in the sea, against the foaming shore,
There stands a rock: The raging billows roar
Above his head in storms; but, when 'tis clear,
Uncurl their ridgy backs, and at his feet appear."

Dryden's Virgil.

WHEN Bruce, of Edward's iron yoke
Had burst the vile inglorious bands,
And Scotia saw her fetters broke,
Her sceptre sway'd by David's hands;

Then Freedom's fire, long quench'd in night,
Shed morning sweetness o'er the sky;
The lustre of her dawning light
Was seen in every peasant's eye.

With looks of love the matron smiled,
With kinder glances hail'd her lord,
More fondly clasp'd and kiss'd her child,
His free-born rights again restored.

Again was heard the roundelay
Resounding o'er the flowery dale;
In court and cottage all were gay,
And shepherds piped in every vale.

The village-maid and high-born dame,
No longer now afraid to love,
Indulged the fond and secret flame,
And whisper'd soft in shady grove.

The glance of Hope each eye relum'd,
And Independence stamp'd the brow;
The virgin's cheek more richly bloom'd,
And Beauty blush'd with softer glow.

But there was one, in virgin pride,
Whose artless charms unrivall'd shone,
Who every Scotian fair outvied,
And sat supreme on Beauty's throne.

Nor cottage-maid, nor royal race,
From Carrick's strand to Caithness' shore,
Show'd such transcendant virgin grace,
As Kelly's lovely Ellenore!

Her father's castle rear'd its head
O'er Elliot's pure and pebbled stream,
Where waving woods their branches spread,
Impervious to the noon-tide gleam.

Around the elm the woodbine twined,
The scented wild-rose blushing fair;
The weeping birch its head reclined;
The fragrant primrose blossom'd there.

The rude rock, grey in hoary pride,
With cool and crystal drops would weep;
While up its fringed and shaggy side
Would green and clasping ivy creep.

Nature had lavish'd all her care,
To deck this rich, romantic glen:
And Brothock youths would oft repair
To breathe the sweets of Kelly-Den.

And Ellenore, at early morn,
Would oft her secret walks pursue;
Her breath like fragrant blossom'd thorn,
Her bosom pure as drops of dew.

And she would seek her shady bower,
O'erhung with buds and branches fair;
Herself the sweetest, fairest flower
Of aught that climb'd and blossom'd there.

And she would join her matin-song
With woodland minstrels warbling round,
While Echo would the strains prolong,
And softly close the mellow sound.

It chanced, she sat, at evening hour,
And mark'd the twilight's purple gleam;
The green leaves flicker'd round her bower,
The evening star shone bright between:

The mavis made the valley ring,
The cushat cooed in covert nigh:
She tried to join, but could not sing;
Her heart was sad—she knew not why.

Her cheek lean'd on her ivory hand,
Till daylight in the West declined;
The shades of night crept o'er the land,
And murmur'd sad the hollow wind.

Soft slumbers o'er her senses stole,
And Fancy sat on Reason's throne;
Bright visions hover'd round her soul,
And dreams of bliss, on earth unknown.

She raised her eye, and wildly gazed;—
The evening star no longer beam'd;
Above her head the meteor blazed,
And through the trees the lightning gleam'd.

Amidst the elemental storm,
She felt her frame with terror shake;
When, lo! a shadowy female form
Before her stood, and slowly spake:

"Soft be thy slumbers, Ellenore!
Nor dreams disturb thy gentle sleep;
Yet thou must dream, to wake once more,—
Yes, lady fair! must wake to weep!

"But streams will glide, and floods o'erflow—
Dark Winter howl, and Summer shine;
The flower will fade, the bud will blow;
And smiles and tears be, lady, thine!"

She paused; and Ellen, trembling, said,
"Mysterious being! speak again!"
But ah! the vision'd form had fled—
Had vanish'd in the dim wood glen.

It was a long and dreary night
That Ellenore in sadness pass'd;
She mused till morn's returning light,
And listen'd to the fitful blast.

The sunny morning shines serene;
Again she seeks her favourite bower;
Bright dews impearl the velvet green,
And fragrance breathes from bud and flower.

But who is he, in plain array,
That comes untimely to intrude,
And thus would cross a lady's way
With glances keen and footsteps rude?

A glow suffused his youthful cheek:
His simple tale he faltering told,
And lowly bow'd;—he came to seek
A vagrant lamb that left his fold.

His manly form, his graceful air,
And modest speech, attention claim;
In wonder lost, the beauteous fair
Is gazing on his youthful frame.

Oh, lady! look not on the youth,
For he is poor and lowly born;
And though his heart has worth and truth,
Such graces Kelly's lord would scorn.

And, Henry! oh, forbear to gaze
On Beauty's bright meridian sun!
Or, like the moth, in taper's blaze,
Still hover near, and fall undone!

Resistless Love was lurking there;
His shaft was fitted to the string;
His aim was true—it pierced the pair,
Swift as the bolt on lightning's wing.

Regardless of her high-born birth,
She loved, and pledged her faith sincere:
Ye proud, but sordid sons of earth,
Suppress that smile, that sapient sneer!

Does not the woodbine's spicy bloom
Round mountain-fir with fondness twine—
The gentle rose-bud breathe perfume,
And in the hawthorn's shade recline?

But now, on Scotian hills around,
The martial clang is heard afar;
And Kelly's lord, in fealty bound,
Attends his monarch to the war.

And Henry too, impell'd by love,
Seeks laurels in the tented field,—
Resolved his prowess there to prove,
His crook exchanged for spear and shield.

"Oh! weep not thus, dear Ellenore!"
He said, and sooth'd the sorrowing maid:
"Our better fate has bliss in store,
Though Heaven that bliss has long delay'd.

"I go, your father's life to guard,
In danger's hour by him to stand:
When we return, I, for reward,
Will kneel, and claim my Ellen's hand!"

What parting tears the lovers shed,
It boots not here in verse to tell;
Nor pause we o'er the "mighty dead,"
On Durham's field who fought and fell.

Ah! why is Ellen's cheek so pale,
While tears her heaving bosom stain?
Ah! she has heard the fatal tale—
Her father and her lover slain!

In vain the Spring's returning bloom;
Each blossom adds to her despair;
She seeks a convent's cloister'd gloom,
To mourn her secret sorrows there.

In Aberbrothock's hallowed pile
Sad Ellenore now hides her head,
And courts Religion's sacred smile,
Her thoughts still dwelling with the dead.

Her hapless love is all unknown;
And can she now that love reveal?
Ah, no! since life and hope have flown,
Her lips shall lasting silence seal.

With orisons at dawn of day,
And vesper hymns at evening hour,
They try to chase her griefs away,
And cheer this early blighted flower.

But still the Abbess fix'd her eyes
On Kelly, more than Ellenore;
And sought to lure her beauteous prize
To leave these hallowed courts no more.

"The world," she said, "is cross and care;
Love flatters only to beguile;
And wealth is but a specious snare,
That lures the heart with siren smile.

"But here is a perpetual calm—
Each jarring passion hush'd to rest;
While hope diffuses heavenly balm,
The sunshine of the cloudless breast."

Twelve lingering months to grief are given;
And now the youthful Ellenore
Resolves to yield her heart to Heaven,
And sigh for earthly bliss no more.

At morn, the bells, with solemn peal,
Are heard afar to load the gale;
A vestal bride her vows will seal—
'Tis Ellenore assumes the veil!

The sun with golden lustre shines
Around St Thomas'* hallow'd towers;
And imaged saints, in sacred shrines,
Are crown'd with wreaths of virgin flowers.

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* The Abbey of Aberbrothock, founded by King William the Lion, in the twelfth century, was dedicated to St Thomas à Becket; whence it is called St Thomas'.

The matin song, the choral swell,
Resounding, strike the raptured ear;
They echo o'er each distant cell,
And vestals wipe the joyous tear.

The holy rites are now begun;
And clouds of incense, curling high,
Obscure the splendour of the sun,
And scatter fragrance o'er the sky.

The solemn anthem's lofty chime
Is heard; each heart with rapture glows;
The pealing organ swells sublime,
Its full-toned diapason flows.

The priest before the altar kneels,
The golden censer smoking near;
The spousal hymn triumphant peals,
And bids the virgin bride appear.

* * * * *

As slow the sacred floor she treads,
The blushing flowers more softly bloom;
Anew they raise their drooping heads,
And breathe around their rich perfume.

But, ah! her cheek no longer glows,
For it is faded, blanch'd, and pale;
No more she smiles fair Kelly's rose,
But droops the lily of the vale!

The victim comes, while sisters wait,
O'er her the sacred veil to throw;
When led within the hallowed gate,
She'll bid farewell to all below.

One moment's pause—one parting look!—
What hast thou seen, sad Ellenore?
Her soul with sudden anguish shook—
She scream'd, and sunk upon the floor!

Has Henry, whom so long she mourn'd,
Come from the mansions of the dead?
No; he from England has return'd,
A captive there by conquerors led.

* * * * * *

The maid is borne from Brothock's towers,
(For love and gold can forms defy;)
Again she blooms in Kelly's bowers,
Her happy bridegroom smiling by.

One "little month" had pass'd away,
Their hands and hearts in love entwined;
Before them bright the prospect lay,
While every care was cast behind:

But Henry now must leave the fair—
To London must again sojourn;
Stern duty asks his presence there—
On wings of Love he'll soon return.

He's gone—arrived—his duty done—
Why should he now prolong his stay?
He knows that Ellen pines alone,
And, sighing, mourns his long delay.

He finds a bark for Brothock's shore:
Unmoor'd, they bend the blacken'd sail;
He thinks of love and Ellenore,
And swiftly scuds before the gale.

But who can winds and waves control?
Abroad the furious tempest flies;
Rough mountain-billows round them roll,
And midnight darkness shrouds the skies.

Before the gale resistless driven,
On wings of wind away they go;
On ruffian billows rise to heaven—
Now diving deep to hell below!

The Inch-Cape-Rock lies right before,
And dark and dreary is the night;
Around them winds and waters roar—
And it is long to morning light!

She strikes the rock—her stately form
In fragments floats upon the wave;
Loud shrieks the Spirit of the Storm,
O'er Henry in his watery grave!

Oh! weep not thus, sweet Ellenore,
Sad as the widow'd turtle-dove:
These tears cannot the dead restore,—
But he has left a pledge of love.

Yes, Ellen, clasp thy infant boy,
Who to thy bosom nestling creeps;
Thy chant of "melancholy joy"
Will sooth his spirit as he sleeps.

The worm of grief has nipt her bloom;
Young Henry's smiles but rack her mind;
For she is hastening to the tomb,
To leave an orphan child behind!

She sought St Thomas' Abbot there;
A meek and holy man was he;
And pour'd to him a parent's prayer,
That he should friend and father be

To infant Henry: "Take," she said,
"That treasured gold, my rents and lands;
In peace I'll lay my weary head,
My son in your protecting hands."

* * * * * *

The grass is green on Ellen's grave—
The Abbot mingled with the clay;
And, borne on Time's unceasing wave,
Full forty years have pass'd away.

But where is now the orphan boy,
She left to Father Francis' care?
He shuns the world's tumultuous joy,
And fills his friendly Abbot's chair.

Above his mother's grassy tomb,
Each morn he bends with humid eye,
And o'er his father's hapless doom
He nightly heaves the secret sigh.

And oft he hears of hapless bark
Wreck'd on the Inch-Cape's rocky steep,
When tempests blow and heavens are dark,
Ingulf'd within the yawning deep.

For year and day he mused and plann'd,
With patient, persevering mind;
And toil'd with most unwearied hand,
To perfect what he had design'd.

Some say that Becket's sainted sprite
Came from the fields of light above,
And join'd the Abbot every night,
To aid him in this work of love.

'Tis done—on Inch-Cape tolls a bell,
While restless waves the power supply;
By day and night, its ceaseless knell
Proclaims aloud that danger's nigh.

At home, abroad, on sea and shore,
The Abbot's name was far renown'd;
And when his earthly toil was o'er,
His dust with grateful tears was crown'd:

For now the sailor fearless steers,
Though murky clouds obscure the sky;
The warning-bell delighted hears,
Stands off, and glides in safety by.

It chanced, on Becket's holy-day,
When calm and smooth the summer seas,
When keels slow plough'd their watery way,
And white sails woo'd the wanton breeze,

The sea-fowl sported on the wave,
The phoca raised his shaggy head;
The mermaid, deep, in shelly cave,
Reclined upon her coral bed:

The Inch-Cape Rock was cover'd deep,
With water, ooze, and sea-weed green,
While round its dark sides shelving steep,
The playful finny tribes were seen;

And ever, with the restless tide,
As rippling waters rose and fell,
O'er Ocean's glassy bosom wide,
Was heard the far resounding knell:

When Vandergroot came sailing past,
A thrifty Dutchman, homeward bound;
On deck, he lean'd against the mast,
And listen'd to the warning sound.

Anon the rock's brown ridge appears,
The ebbing tide has left it dry;
The wary Dutchman sounds and steers,
With cautious, keen, observing eye:

The winds in secret chambers sleep;
The boat is launch'd—Inch-Cape is nigh,
The oars are plied, with steady sweep;
Close to its shelving side they lie.

Now on the rock the skipper stands,
The wondrous structure to survey;
And Vandergroot, with felon hands,
Has borne the warning-bell away.

Jan Hanson was a sailor bold;
But when the plunderer's spoil he spied,
His cheek grew pale, his blood ran cold,
And thus, with quivering lip, he cried,—

"Oh, Captain! leave that bell behind;
For it will raise the mountain-wave;
Its knell will wake the tempest wind,
And plunge us in a watery grave!"

Vangroot replies, "Peace, drivelling fool!
Vile slave of superstitious fear!
For juggling priests a proper tool—
But I permit no croaking here!"

"'Tis Achan's prize—the accursed thing!"
Jan Hanson cried, "Set me on shore:
For it thy funeral-knell shall ring,
And thou in death this deed deplore!"

Rage fired the Captain's boiling blood,
He gnash'd his teeth with horror grim,—
Dash'd Hanson in the briny flood—
And cried, "Now, dotard! sink or swim!"

Down, down he dives in Ocean's bed ;
The bubbling waters o'er him close ;
Now parting round his dripping head,
Again he to the surface rose.

He grappled with the waves in vain,
And on his murderer fix'd his eyes :
" Know, Vandergroot—we meet again !"
He said, and sunk, no more to rise.

Now blows a fresh and favouring gale ;
They homeward scud, from danger free ;
No calm unbends the swelling sail,
Till they have reach'd the Zuyder Zee.

And Vandergroot his vrow has met ;
She smiles—he eats, he drinks, and smoke
And in his chair, at evening set,
He with his children cracks his jokes.

Van had a garden trim and gay,
And there the bell on high was hung ;
And each returning holiday,
A merry peal was joyous rung.

The busy year revolves around,
And, leaving Holland far behind,
Now Vandergroot for Leith is bound,
And struggling with the waves and wind.

By squalls and calms his voyage cross'd,
He sees the gathering storm arise:
It comes—his bark is tempest-toss'd,
And dark clouds load the lowering skies.

'Twas Becket's holy vigil night—
And, conscience-struck, Mynheer is dumb:
Each heart is sick with withering fright;
They feel the fatal hour is come!

Around their heads loud thunders roll;
Blue lightnings shoot across the sky;
Despair has seized each shivering soul,
And horror glares in every eye!

Their helm is lost—their sails are riven,
And all around is midnight gloom;
Before the maddening tempest driven,
They, wailing, wait approaching doom!

While every seaman stands aghast,
They hear a shriek, loud, wild, and shrill;
The billows rest—and hush'd the blast—
One little moment all is still!

While slept the winds, and paused the storm,
The parting waters show'd a sprite,
That bore Jan Hanson's spectred form,
Amidst a blaze of meteor light!

It spoke with look of withering scorn,
And laugh'd with wild unearthly glee:
"Inch-Cape is near—'tis Becket's morn—
And Vandergroot shall sleep with me!"

The spectre sinks beneath the waves;
The bark is whirl'd—the breakers roar—
The furious tempest louder raves,
And every heart's last hope is o'er!

The lightning's baleful glare reveals
Ahead Inch-Cape's portentous rock:
She forward flies—she strikes and reels,
Recoiling from the fatal shock!

She strikes again: Wild bursts the sound,
The last loud shriek of dread despair!
Her shiver'd fragments float around,
And all is awful stillness there!

At Amsterdam no tempest blew;
The twilight sky was calm and bright;
Dame Vandergroot, with friends a few,
In pleasure pass'd the joyous night.

The midnight hour is past and gone,
And still they laugh and dance and sing,
When echoes deep a hollow groan,
And Becket's bell is heard to ring!

Bewildering fear has dimm'd each eye,
And silence sits on every tongue:
At last they to the garden hie,
Where still the bell resounding rung.

They saw a spectre bellman stand,
A glistening halo gleaming round;
A shroud hung dripping in his hand,
His brows with oozy sea-weed bound.

It was Jan Hanson's restless sprite,
Which laugh'd, with loud exulting yell;
And, sinking in the shades of night,
Cried, "Vandergroot's departing knell!"

TALES.

THE LAIRD OF LUMLEY-DEN.

" I 've now turn'd wild—a commoner of nature;
Of all forsaken, and forsaking all."

Dryden.

" Say, wanderer, why with cheek so pale,
With thin hairs white as mountain-snow,
Dost thou still haunt this lonely vale,
When the chilly winds of Autumn blow?
Why is the cold damp earth thy bed—
That daisied sod thy nightly pillow—
With the fogs of heaven around thy head,
And thy canopy the leafless willow?
I fain would prove myself a friend;—
My home is near—my heart is warm;
My Anna's smile with mine shall blend,
And Beauty's blush thy sorrows charm."

His hoary head the old man raised,
And wildly on the speaker gazed;
Strange fires were sparkling in his eye:
In notes akin to agony
He thus began, "I would not scorn
The heart that feels for one forlorn;
But, leave me alone to linger here;
The world has nothing that I hold dear!
Of Friendship I hate to hear the sound,
For it tears afresh a rankling wound;
To beauty my heart has long been cold;
Yet I was young, though you see me old:
Then Woman's smile and melting eye—
But why should I speak of the days gone by?"
He paused, while deep his dark brow gloom'd,
Then glanced around, and thus resumed,—
"My clan and kindred, name and birth,
I fain would blot them from the earth!
Though shepherds, who frequent the glen,
Call me the Laird of Lumley-Den,
A barren waste—a dreary spot,
Where I would hide, by all forgot.
Yet I beheld life's morning shine,
When youth and hope and wealth were mine.

'Twas then my heart was doom'd to prove
The stern omnipotence of love;
And I beheld, in Ellen's eyes,
A brighter fire, a richer prize,
Than ever Grecian painter drew,
Or Fancy sketch'd to poet's view.
But there are proud ambitious sires,
Whose hearts forget their former fires:
My Ellen was a cottage maid—
And mine, in wrath, our loves forbade.

"Rebellion's voice was heard afar,
'Twixt King and Clans intestine war:
My father, scorning king and law,
Now call'd on me the sword to draw.
I own, the cause to me was dear,
And 'coward' hateful to my ear;
My sire, a despot in his will;
But Ellen's love was dearer still.

"I sought and found her—told my tale:
Her bosom heaved, her cheek grew pale.
'And why,' cried I, 'should Fate divide?
Confirm your love, and be my bride!'
She blush'd—I urged—entreated—press'd—
She gave her hand—and we were bless'd!

I gaz'd on all her glowing charms,
While virgin blushes bless'd my arms,—
Drank life and light from her bright eye;
While rapture breathed in every sigh.

"But man must taste the cup of wo,
And mine was doom'd to overflow.
It was a bitter draught—and I
Alas! have drain'd the goblet dry!
But still the chalice fills again;
I drink—and still the dregs remain!
My brain it burns—my heart it thrills—
It maddens—wounds—but never kills!
And Death, whose hand could bring relief,
Still stands aloof and mocks my grief!

"Stranger, why does your cheek grow pale?
'Tis but the prelude to my tale.
Your ears will tingle, and your heart will swell,
As you list to hear what I must tell:
But leave me not; for you've touch'd the string,
And loud in your ear the notes shall ring—
Notes of wo, that might wake the dead!
He who sleeps on a clay-cold bed—
She who rests in a grassy tomb,
Where the woodbine waves, and wild-flowers bloom—

And the little cherub with bright blue eye,
Who sits on the white cloud gliding by!—
When will they wake? Must they sleep for ever?
And when shall I rest? They answer, 'Never!'

"Where stood my tale?——In Eden fair!
My bride—my Ellen, smiling there:
But the Destroying Angel pass'd,
And we from Paradise were cast—
From bowers of bliss—down, down we fell,
Ay, deeper far than tongue can tell.

"One little week had pass'd away,
While we in Love's Elysium lay;
But years and ages circling round,
With bliss like ours can ne'er be crown'd!
The Rebel Clans the signal gave,—
I saw the floating banner wave;
With tingling ears and panting breath,
I heard the clang—the note of death,
Which forced me to the field of strife,
From her, to me more dear than life.
My hour was come—I must away:
'Twas death to go, and worse to stay;
But Ellen could not tarry there,
And she must hide—I knew not where.

I had a friend—let me be cool!
I was a weak, confiding fool!
To him in faithful charge was given
My love—my life—my all of heaven!
I drank the tears that dew'd her cheek—
We sigh'd the woes we could not speak;
I clasp'd her to my throbbing breast;
Her lips in frenzied rapture press'd;
Then tore myself from Ellen's arms,
And madly rush'd to war's alarms!

"I stop not here our route to trace,
Till Victory lured us to disgrace:
As little may I pause to tell
What Clans and kinsmen fought and fell,
How broad-swords flash'd and helmets rang—
Of keen claymores, like lightning gleaming—
The rolling drum—the trumpet's twang—
Of mangled limbs, and life-blood streaming—
The thundering cannon's deafening roar,
And death, like showery hail thick flying—
Of wretches writhing in their gore—
The groans of those in anguish dying,—
How bones beneath his hoofs were crush'd,
When fierce the furious war-horse dash'd!

Of these, if you delight to hear—
If such are music to your ear—
Go, read of red Culloden's heath,
And wander o'er that field of death:
Though hush'd are now the dying groans,
You still may see the whitening bones:
Through brainless skulls the whistling wind
May call your country's wrongs to mind;
And there you'll see the heath-bloom wave
Above my father's early grave:
Why was not mine the blissful lot
To fall with him, and sleep forgot?
But I had pray'd, amidst the strife,
That Heaven would yet prolong my life;
For still in Death's most dread alarms,
My fond heart mused on Ellen's charms.
In wrath was heard my impious prayer,
And I was spared, a load to bear—
A load which time can never lighten,
In midnight shades which ne'er can brighten;
And deeper still the gathering gloom
Will thicken round me to the tomb.
" Forgive my wildly-wandering brain—
I had forgot my tale again;

Though day and night it haunts my mind,
Around my heart with horror twined.
" Ay—'twas Drummossie's field of blood
That crush'd the cause for which I stood,—
Left me, on earth to mourn alone,
My father, fame, and fortune gone ;
An exile driven, by cursed war,
From friends, and home, and Ellen far!—
On land pursued, on ocean toss'd,
I roam'd, till all but hope was lost.
" My Ellen, rear'd in rural cot,
Fate had denied her humble lot
Her thoughts on paper to impart,
And with her pen pour out the heart.
Our mutual friend was therefore made
The channel which our minds convey'd ;
And tender was the tale he wove,
Which told of Ellen's health and love.
He wrote again, and wish'd me joy,
The parent of a lovely boy !
Are you a parent ?—you will know
The fond delight, the fervid glow,
That shot through all my raptured frame!
If you are not, my words were tame ;

A husband's and a father's love
Are feelings Fancy ne'er can prove.
" Time stole apace—I heard no more
Of Ellen, and my heart was sore.
I wrote, and wrote; but no reply—
Suspense increased to agony;
Day after day my bosom burn'd:
At last, disguised, I home return'd.
While Hope and Fear contending strove,
I forward press'd, impell'd by Love.
I reach'd my friend's—the hour was late—
And enter'd softly, blind to Fate—
To see—oh! horror to my sight!
Oh! fatal hour—accursed night!—
My Ellen leaning on his breast!
His lip her cheek with rapture press'd!
They started both in dumb surprise;
Rage, fire, and fury, fill'd my eyes:
' Ellen!' I cried, ' vile, perjured wife!'
And from the table grasp'd a knife:
With up-raised arm I forward rush'd;
He sprung aside, then strongly push'd
Me back: I stumbled—fell,
With mutter'd words, unmeet to tell!

Against a corner struck my head,
And light and all but life was fled.
I woke—and, wondering, rose again,
With aching head and whirling brain:
Confused, amazed, I gazed around;
My senses in oblivion drown'd.
But memory soon recall'd the whole,
And woke the tempest in my soul.
Transfix'd with rage, I stood alone—
Hector and Ellen both were gone.
From room to room I ran with speed,
My bosom steel'd to ruthless deed.
I search'd in vain, for they were fled;
But curtains waved around a bed:
'Twas hell to think that Ellen's charms
Might there have bless'd a villain's arms!
I foam'd—I stamp'd—the curtain drew—
A blooming infant met my view:
I for a moment gazing stood,
But madness fired my boiling blood:
'Vile imp of hell!' I wildly cried,
And writhed its neck—it gasp'd, and died!
"As springs the tiger from his lair,
I furious sought the guilty pair,—

How long, or where, I cannot tell,
My brain was fired—my heart was hell!
We met at last, no more to part,—
My arm was strong—I pierced his heart!
'Twas on that spot—see there his bed!
His blood has dyed the brown heath red:
Though long, long years have linger'd by,
Still, still it waves in purple dye;
Nor Winter's frost, nor snow, nor rain,
Nor Summer's dew, can bleach the stain!
Yet I laugh'd till echoes round me rang,
When his heart-blood on my bosom sprang,
And groan'd because my faithless bride
Lay not as sound asleep beside!
I turn'd to go, but heard a sound
Which seem'd to shake the hills around;
Like thunder bursting on the ear,
It said, 'Your home, your grave is here!
Your hand has seal'd a sinner's doom,
Untimely hurried to the tomb!'
"With bitter tears (for I then could weep),
I dug his grave—it was dark and deep;
At dead of night I laid his head—
With trembling hands his turf I spread:

At morn I saw the heath-bell wave,
Still wet with blood, above his grave!
I wish'd to fly—but it could not be—
Fate still had greater woes for me,—
By day compell'd to watch and weep;
At night to rave, afraid to sleep.

" One day I gazed on the fiery sun,
'Midst gathering clouds of murky dun:
He seem'd to weep in tears of blood,
And hoarsely murmur'd the distant flood;
Red lightnings shot from their secret bed,
While thunders bellow'd around my head,
Till they seem'd to shake the vault of heaven:
The brown heath blazed, and the rocks were riven!
I look'd around, and beheld a form
Whose loud laugh mingled with the storm:
It seem'd a woman, with bosom bare,—
Her eye was bright as the lightning's glare;
Her cheek was pale and her garments torn;
She clapp'd her hands, and laugh'd in scorn.
Oh God!—that laugh!—my soul it shook!
It thrill'd my heart—and I paused to look:
One dreadful glance the maniac cast!
My heart it froze at the withering blast—

'Twas Ellen! * * * *

* * * wildly she glanced again,

And my blood ran chill in every vein!

On me she gazed; then her arms she spread

With a shriek that might have waked the dead,

And cried, 'Come, love! let me clasp thy form!

Camest thou here on the mountain-storm?

I know thee well—poor wandering sprite,

Why didst thou leave the fields of light?

I had forgot—but now I know—

It was to seek thy bride below:

But she was left alone, forsaken!

From dreams of bliss, in grief to waken.

Though thy corpse reposed in ocean deep,

Yet sure thy spirit saw Ellen weep:

Didst thou never see the lovely blossom,

That nestling lay in her widow'd bosom?

Yes, thou hast seen; for I felt thy kiss

When sadly I press'd a sleepless pillow;

And thy spirit left the bowers of bliss,

And thy cold clay slept beneath the billow.

But I was poor and the world unkind,

And thou camest no more to sooth my mind:

I could not love; but my hand I gave,

While my heart was thine in thy watery grave.

A spirit came—but it was not thee,
Though it bore thy form—for it frown'd on me;
It call'd my name—'twas a fiend of hell!
And did—what my blood runs cold to tell.
From the bed our son it bore away,
And left a corpse where my darling lay!
My friend had fled, and my child was gone;—
To seek for them I have stray'd alone.
I've climb'd the clouds—I have scaled the sky,
And scoop'd the graves where the dead men lie;
But I've found my boy—he dwells in light!
See! there's the glance of his eye so bright!'
And she in frenzied rapture scream'd,
As on her cheek the lightning gleam'd;
And cried, 'Come down—come hither, my boy!
Your father's here—we'll dance for joy!
See! our cherub sits on yon dark cloud—
He smiles—and, hark! he calls aloud:
But he will not come—we'll go together:
I know the way, and will lead thee thither.
I'll bear thee up, for I can fly—
Clasp round my neck, and reach the sky!'
She flung her arms around my waist,
And cried, as her head lay on my breast,

'Now, now!—we mount—we swim—we soar!
Cold earth, farewell for evermore!'
She heaved a sigh—her spirit fled,
And slowly sunk her lifeless head!
Her clay-cold cheek on my bosom lay;
I clasp'd her form till the close of day;
My spirit seem'd about to part,
And death-like torpor chill'd my heart.
Why burst not then the bolt of heaven,
On one who cannot be forgiven?
Ingulf'd in Guilt's o'erwhelming tide—
A murderer!—a filicide!
But I am doom'd to live, and feel
The pangs that time can never heal;
In lingering age, like Cain, to bear
The mark—the burden of despair!

"That weeping willow's branches wave
Above the injured Ellen's grave;
In dews of heaven, the woodbines bloom
My hands have twined around her tomb;
But my wither'd heart has long been dead;
I heave no sigh, no tear I shed;
Some viewless hand has touch'd my clay—
It will not sicken nor decay.

The curse of lengthen'd years is mine,
When the sun of life has ceased to shine,
And midnight darkness closing round,
Has plunged me deep in gloom profound:
Like airy dream the world is gone,
And I in chaos placed alone,
A changeless form, am doom'd to bide,
Till countless ages round me glide.
I sometimes think that mental pain
Has chill'd my heart and crazed my brain;
But you have heard that it cannot be,
For maniacs never talk like me;
'Tis Heaven has shaped my thorny path—
For I am guilty, doom'd to wrath.

"At morn, I mark the heath-bell nod,
Still stain'd with blood, on Hector's sod;
I sit and chide the lingering light,
And sicken for the shades of night:
They come—affrighted and forlorn;
I, writhing, wish returning morn.

"Methinks, the sun that rolls on high
Has sometimes smiled and bid me fly:
I joyous rise—prepare to go;
But hear a voice that whispers 'No!'

It softly breathes when Summer glows,
And bellows loud when the tempest blows;
When mountain-torrents wildly sweep,
I hear its murmurs, hoarse and deep;
When thunder shakes the hills around,
It comes with loud and startling sound,
And wakes me from my frightful dream,
To the rushing rain and the lightning's gleam.

"I see my son in the dews of morn,
And hear his song on the breezes borne:
He beckons me in the pale moonlight,
And fans my cheek with the winds of night:
While Ellen glides in her airy car,
Through fields of light like a shooting star!
I stretch my hands—but they haste away—
I kneel—I pray—but they will not stay!
Oh! when shall I follow? They answer, 'Never!'
How long must I mourn? They cry, 'For ever!'"

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